

BRITAIN'S BEST MILITARY HISTORY MAGAZINE

# HISTORY of WAR



**"I FELT NO PITY"**  
INTERVIEW WITH A FEMALE  
SOVIET SNIPER



## HUNTING THE TRITZ

DID LUFTWAFFE ERROR DOOM NAZI  
GERMANY'S LAST BATTLESHIP?



### MITSUBISHI ZERO

Genius engineering behind  
Japan's superior carrier fighter

### RISE OF PRUSSIA

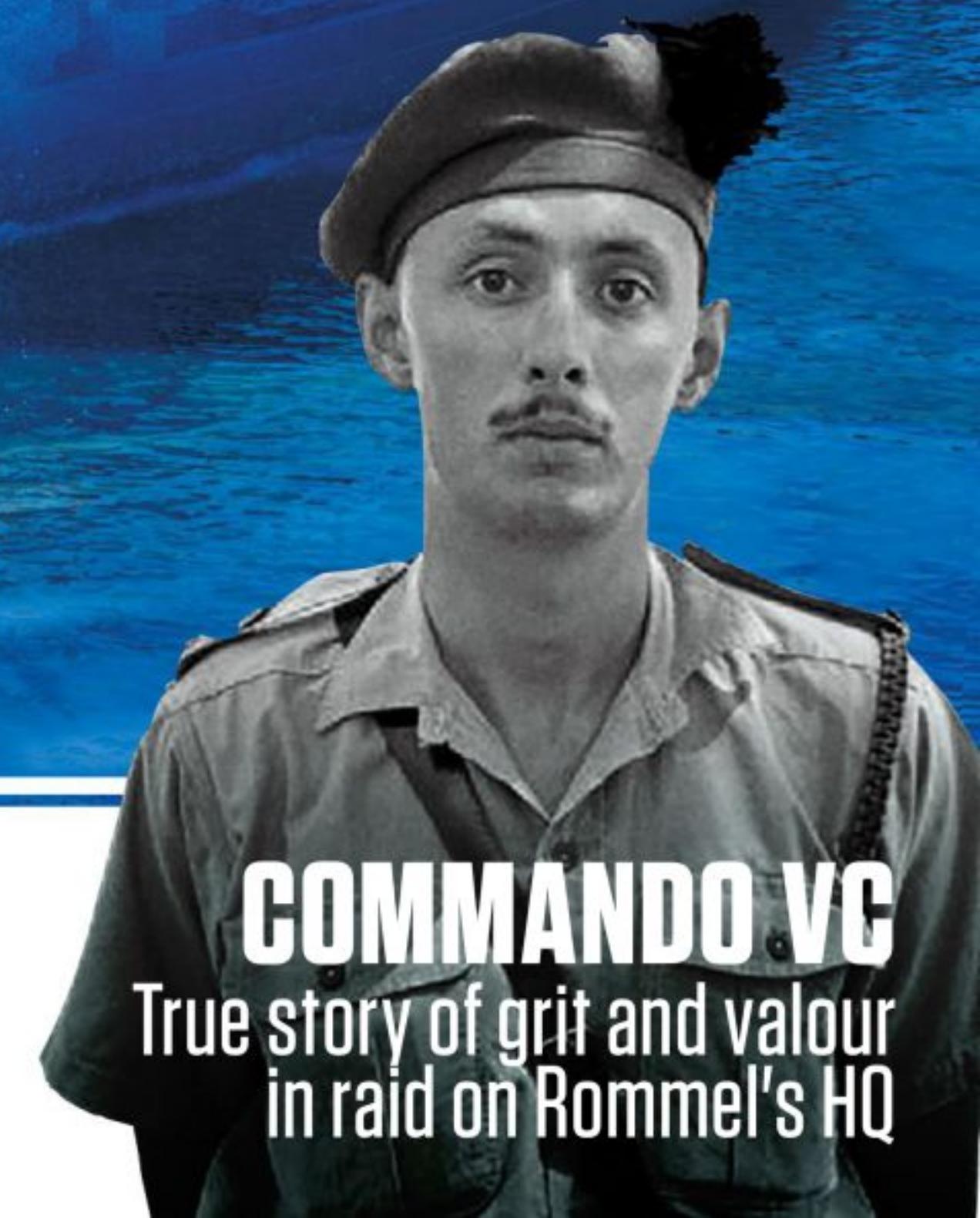
Victorious tactics at the  
1866 battle of Königgrätz

### COMMANDO VC

True story of grit and valour  
in raid on Rommel's HQ



ISSUE 074



# KING & COUNTRY'S



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A ground crew load one of the new 'earthquake' bombs onto a Lancaster II bomber, the same bombs that sunk the 45,000 ton German battleship Tirpitz in Norway

Image: Alamy



# Welcome

**O**n the morning of 12 November 1944 Nazi Germany's last remaining battleship finally keeled over and capsized, its hull crippled and decks flooded by a brace of Tallboy bombs. Although Bomber Command carried out this coup de grace on Tirpitz, the ship had been hunted down relentlessly for over a year. Throughout these operations the RAF, Fleet Air Arm and Royal Navy had relied on the crucial intelligence reports from Norwegian Resistance networks and reconnaissance flights. It was a truly momentous blow for the Kriegsmarine and another major propaganda victory for the Allies.

*team*

**Tim Williamson**  
Editor-in-Chief



## CONTRIBUTORS

### TOM GARNER

This issue Tom spoke with journalist Peter Taylor MBE, who recalls his coverage of The Troubles in Northern Ireland (page 56). He also spoke with WWII veteran Yulia Zhukova, who served as a sniper on the Eastern Front (page 44).



### LAWRENCE PATERSON

Larry is a deep sea wreck explorer, heavy metal drummer and a widely published expert on the history of the German navy. This issue he uncovers the final hours of the battleship Tirpitz and why the Luftwaffe was blamed for its sinking (page 26).



### DR MICHAEL JONES

Michael is an historian, fellow of the Royal Historical Society and a member of the British Commission for Military History. Turn to page 82 where he concludes his three-part series on the invasion of the Falkland Islands.





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The finest military minds from all over Europe played their part in the conflict

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# WAR in FOCUS

## FASCIST MARCH ON LONDON

Taken: 1929

Members of the Fascio di Londra, the London Fascist Organisation, give the Fascist salute at the Cenotaph in Whitehall. After Mussolini's March on Rome in 1922, Fascist movements gained attention around the world, and right-wing groups adopted the salutes and stylings of Italian fascism, including the British Union of Fascists, founded by Oswald Mosley in 1932.



# WAR in FOCUS

## "DEUS VULT"

Taken: 23 November, 2000

A US Army Crusader Advanced Field Artillery System test-fires on a range in Arizona. The 155mm self-propelled gun was designed to replace the military's incumbent system, the M109A6 Paladin. In 2002 Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld cancelled the Crusader project. During tests, the system was capable of firing eight to ten rounds per minute.





# WAR in FOCUS

## BERET BATTER UP

Taken: 31 May, 1981

A British soldier poses with children in a Catholic area of Belfast, while one boy takes a jesting swing at the man's beret with a bat. Despite the smiles, 1981 saw continued violence in Northern Ireland, and IRA prisoners again began hunger strikes, which resulted in the death of Bobby Sands, who had recently become an MP after a by-election in April.







# WAR in FOCUS

## BRING DOWN THAT WALL

Taken: 10 November, 1989

East German Border Guards stand atop the wall separating East and West Berlin, near the Brandenburg Gate. The previous evening crowds had begun to attack the structure itself and for the first time in decades East and West Berliners were crossing the border freely. The wall was gradually broken up over the following days and weeks.



# FRANCO-DUTCH WAR

Louis XIV of France aims to conquer the Spanish Netherlands by invading the Dutch Republic in an expansionist war that is initially fought with the unlikely assistance of England

## FRENCH AMBITIONS

Upon beginning his personal rule, Louis XIV conducts an expansionist foreign policy with plans to annex the Habsburg Spanish Netherlands (now Belgium, Luxembourg and parts of northern France, western Germany and the southern Netherlands). He also turns on his former ally, the Dutch Republic, and aims to defeat them.



1661-72

1 June 1670

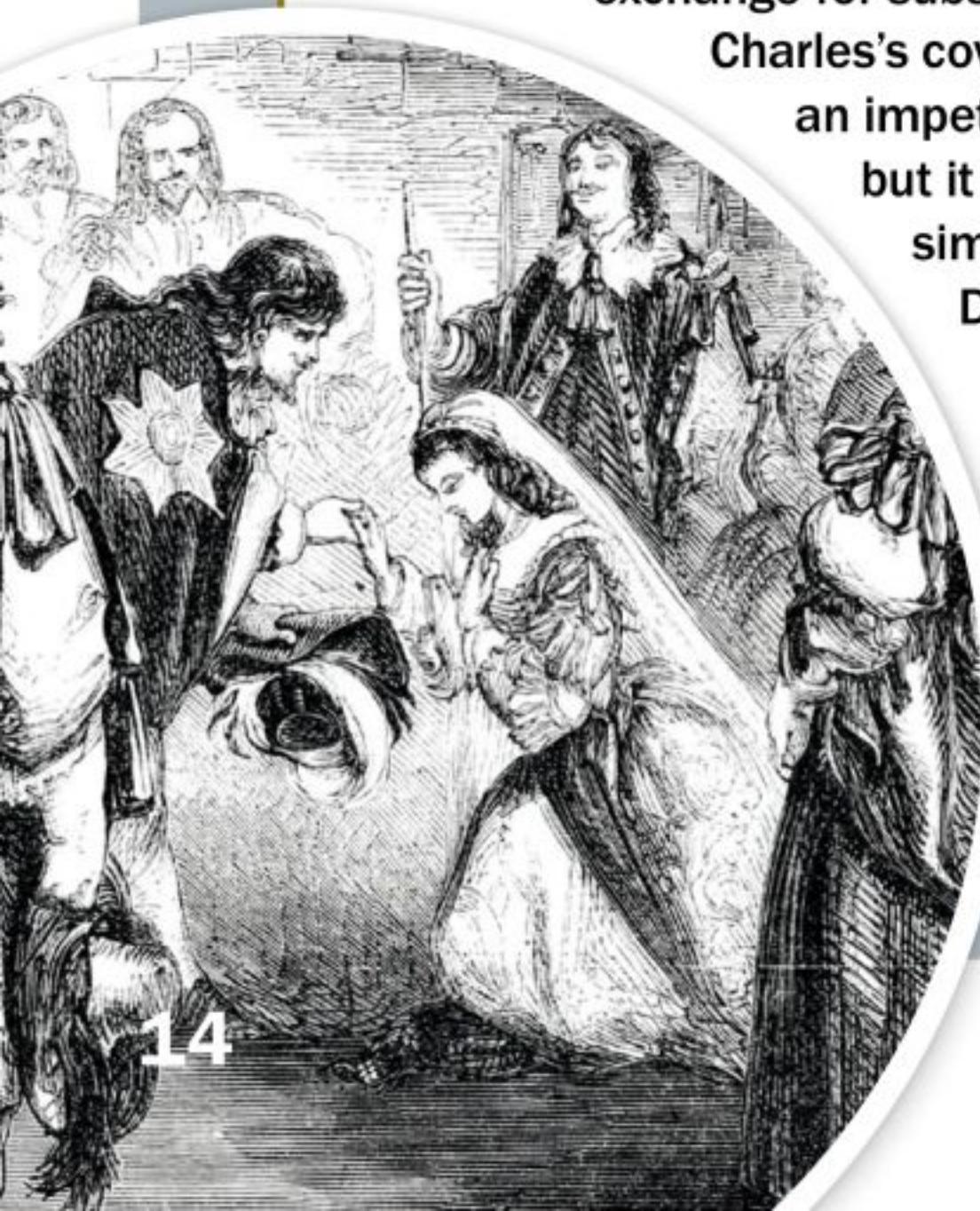
1672

1672

## TREATY OF DOVER

Charles II of England signs a secret treaty with France. He agrees to convert to Roman Catholicism and assist Louis XIV with ships and soldiers for his upcoming war against the Dutch Republic in exchange for substantial sums of money.

Charles's covert support gives Louis an impetus to begin the conflict but it also results in the simultaneous Third Anglo-Dutch War (1672-74).



*Left: Henrietta of England, Duchess of Orléans, arrives at Dover to assist her brother Charles II in negotiations with the French*

## 'THE DISASTER YEAR'

The Dutch Republic is invaded by the forces of France, England and the prince-bishops of Münster and Cologne. The French occupy three of the republic's seven provinces but the Dutch fight back on both land and sea. Nevertheless the Dutch economy never fully recovers and 1672 becomes known as 'Rampjaar' – 'The Disaster Year'.

*Allegory Of The Disaster Year by Johannes van Wijckersloot. In the painting, a supporter of the House of Orange shows a Dutch regent a drawing of a wounded lion surrounded by a broken fence*



## THE WATERLINE

Prince William III of Orange rallies the Dutch States Army behind a water-based defence system known as the 'Waterline'. The dykes around Amsterdam are opened, which floods a large area. An impassable barrier of water and mud blocks further French advances into the republic.



*The star-shaped water defences of Naarden, North Holland: a magnificent example of the Dutch Waterline*

Louis XIV in a trench at the Siege of Douai during the War of Devolution (1667-68). Dutch opposition to France's aims during this conflict earns the French king's displeasure



A silver medal commemorating the Siege of Groningen. The city still celebrates its victory as an annual local holiday

Siege Of Groningen by Bernhard von Galen



## SIEGE OF GRONINGEN 02

The Dutch win a siege in the northeast Netherlands against the French-allied forces of the Prince-Bishopric of Münster. The victory ends all hopes of Münster to push deeper into the republic and the Dutch States Army is even able to successfully reclaim conquered land from only a few weeks previously.



## SIEGE OF MAASTRICHT 03

The French take the strong Limburg city under the ingenious command of Sébastien Vauban. The famous military engineer constructs parallel trenches and mines with substantial artillery support. This enables a direct assault on Maastricht's walls that ends in the city's capture with minimal French casualties.

*Louis XIV being crowned with laurel leaves following his victory at Maastricht*



9 July-17 August 1672

7 June 1672

13-30 June 1673

## BATTLE OF SOLEBAY 01

An outnumbered Dutch naval force fights a combined Anglo-French fleet commanded by James, Duke of York, off the coast of Suffolk. Although the battle is tactically indecisive, Solebay enables the Dutch to strategically frustrate more invasions of their republic.

*The burning of HMS Royal James at the Battle of Solebay. This advanced ship has only been in service for four months before it is dramatically sunk*



# MAJOR ENGAGEMENTS



21 August 1673



Admiral Cornelis Tromp's flagship Gouden Leeuw depicted at the Battle of Texel by marine painter Willem van de Velde the Younger

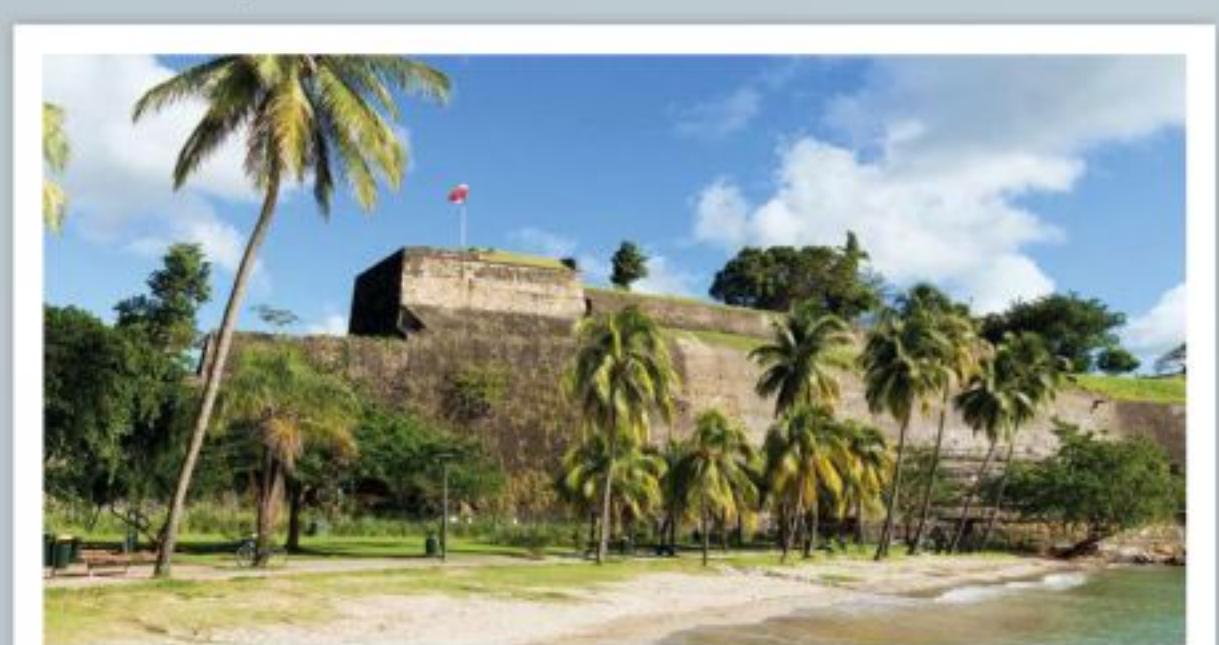
## BATTLE OF TEXEL 04

Dutch admiral Michiel de Ruyter defeats an Anglo-French fleet off the island of Texel. The ships of admirals Edward Spragge and Cornelis Tromp engage in a personal duel during the battle while de Ruyter bombards the English ships until they abandon attempts to land troops. The engagement is also the last battle of the Third Anglo-Dutch War.

## THE WAR EXPANDS

The French change their strategy to push against Imperial Habsburg territories including Flanders, the Rhineland, Spain and Sicily. Most of the campaigning takes place in the Rhineland and Louis XIV supports minor campaigns that absorb Spanish and Dutch naval resources.

The war spreads to the Caribbean when the Dutch launch a failed naval attack against Fort Saint-Louis in Martinique in 1674



## BATTLE OF PALERMO

The French Navy dramatically defeats a Dutch-Spanish fleet off the southern coast of Italy. The Spanish suffer the most losses although the French aren't able to completely destroy their opponents.

*The Dutch commander at Palermo, Jan den Haen, is killed during the battle while the Spanish incur casualties of 1,700*



## TURENNE'S WINTER CAMPAIGN

The French war against the Dutch provokes the neighbouring Holy Roman Empire into the war against Louis XIV. Turenne surprises Imperial forces by campaigning in the Palatinate of the Rhine during winter. The French win victories at the battles of Mulhouse and Turckheim, which forces the Habsburgs to evacuate Alsace.

Marshall Turenne depicted asleep before the Battle of Turckheim

Images: Alamy, Getty

11 August 1674

1674-75

27 July 1675

2 June 1676

1678

## BATTLE OF SENEFFE ⑤

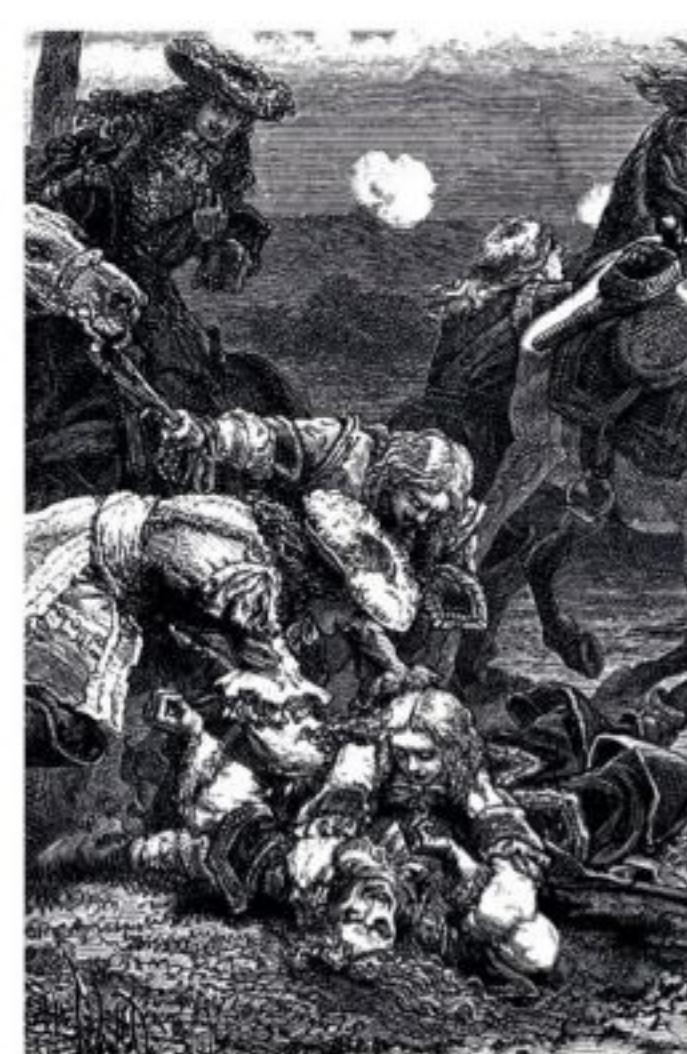
The Prince of Condé and William of Orange fight an inconclusive battle in the Spanish Netherlands. The French are on the defensive and although they tactically win the battle there are heavy casualties on both sides. The engagement has little effect on the war as the Dutch are able to be resupplied with new regiments.



Both sides suffer casualties of at least 10,000

## BATTLE OF SALZBACH ⑥

An Imperial army commanded by Field Marshal Raimondo Montecuccoli takes part in an artillery duel with Turenne's French force. The engagement is itself inconclusive but an Imperial cannonball defies all odds and kills Turenne. His soldiers declare, "Our father is dead, but we must avenge him."



Montecuccoli immediately pays tribute upon hearing of his opponent's demise, "Today died a man who did honour to mankind"

## TREATIES OF NIJMEGEN

A series of peace treaties are signed to end hostilities. France returns Maastricht and suspends tariffs against the Dutch Republic. This represents significant victory for Dutch naval power and commerce but the French make gains elsewhere. Spain is forced to cede parts of the Spanish Netherlands and Franche-Comté to France while the Holy Roman Empire gives up Freiburg im Breisgau.



The French build Place des Victoires in Paris, complete with an equestrian statue of Louis XIV, to celebrate their gains in the war

## FRANCO-DUTCH WAR

*The French on the famous winter march that caught the Germans off guard*



# FAMOUS BATTLE: TURCKHEIM

On 5 January 1675 a French army surprised the occupying Imperial forces in Alsace and won a famous victory

**T**he small town of Turckheim endured a miserable experience during the Franco-Dutch War. Pillaged by French forces following the Battle of Sinzheim in 1674, it was destined to become the seat of battle again just six months later.

German soldiers were occupying the Alsace region at the close of the 1674 campaigning season. With around 55,000 troops dispersed around the region in winter quarters, no further action was anticipated. However, the French general (Henry de La Tour, the Viscount of Turenne) had given warning that he was not a conventional commander. He had engaged in strategic manoeuvres in the winter of 1672-73 and had similar plans now.

Embarking on a daring march and using the Vosges mountains as a screen for his army, Turenne caught the occupying Imperial forces completely by surprise and forced them to hastily regroup. Under the Elector of Brandenburg Prussia (Frederick William) and Alexander von Bournonville, they managed to gather around 30,000 of their men near Turckheim, where they awaited the approach of the French forces.

#### The flanking march

Turenne, also with around 30,000 infantry, was unwilling to surrender the initiative, despite the fatigue of his army following its long march. A frontal assault, preceded by an artillery barrage, would have been expected by his enemies, but instead Turenne opted to replicate

the tactics of his daring march. He would outflank the German army.

Turenne's men were not only tired, they were confused. Unused to campaigning in the winter, they were not happy at being asked to confront a well-posted enemy, but Turenne's genius was about to tip the balance in their favour.

Making a show of threatening the German centre and left, Turenne took a section of his army (around a third of his total strength) and embarked on a march to get around their right flank. Again the lie of the land screened his forces and the Germans were so oblivious to the threat they even removed two battalions that had been garrisoning Turckheim. Seeing his chance to secure the important position, Turenne first sent dragoons into the town and then ordered troops of the Champagne Brigade into the vineyards on each side.

On the right of the French forces, where the Count de Lorge commanded, little was happening, as the German army seemed happy to wait for the anticipated frontal assault. On the French left however, reconnaissance revealed that the Germans had woken up to the danger at Turckheim and were sending reinforcements. Twelve battalions of infantry, six cannon and a supporting force of cavalry were marching towards the town, which was about to become the focus of the day.

The most serious fighting centred on a mill close to the town. German forces captured it with a determined charge, but Turenne sent 300 men to retake it, soon reinforcing them with two further battalions. After fierce fighting

the mill was in French hands once more and Turenne ordered it to be set alight.

The French troops then stood firm against formidable odds, holding off numerically superior German forces as both sides fed more troops into the area. The arrival of French artillery helped Turenne hold his ground until the late evening, at which point the Germans broke off their attack.

#### Alsace saved

Turenne's surprise tactics certainly played a part in the French victory, but the Germans were also hampered by having command split between Frederick William and von Bournonville.

French casualties are generally reported as being negligible, but some accounts insist the German losses (a total of around 3,400 with the bulk of those taken prisoner) were only slightly heavier than those of the French. It is difficult to imagine the French holding Turckheim for so long under such fierce assault without taking significant losses.

Turenne solidified his position after the battle, occupying a commanding height near Turckheim in anticipation of further fighting the next day, but under cover of darkness the rattled German army withdrew.

Alsace had been saved for the French and Turenne had crowned his most remarkable campaign with a stunning victory.

## REVOLUTIONARY COMMANDER

THE VISCOUNT TURENNE, VICTOR AT TURCKHEIM, WAS ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL GENERALS OF HIS DAY UNTIL HE MET HIS END AT THE BATTLE OF SASBACH

Operating in the very heart of the so-called 'military revolution', Henri de La Tour was perhaps the finest general of his era. Unusually, while most generals peak early and then fade, the Viscount Turenne improved throughout his 50-year career and his greatest triumph, the Battle of Turckheim, came right at the end of his life. Six months later he died at the Battle of Sasbach.

Having fought alongside the Dutch in the Eighty Years' War, and then distinguishing himself in the Thirty Years' War, he was made a Marshal of France in 1643 and Marshal General of France (the highest rank in Louis XIV's army) in 1660.

His unconventional thinking was not always welcomed. He had petitioned to mount an autumn campaign in 1672, but had been denied permission by the French Minister of War, the Marquis de Louvois. Later generations, however, were more appreciative. Napoleon Bonaparte recommended him to his generals as a man whose campaigns should be studied again and again.

*Turenne carved out a glittering reputation over a career that spanned half a century*



Vauban, bearing a scar on his left cheek, a result of a wound suffered in 1655

**"VAUBAN WAS AN EXPERT AT BOTH CONSTRUCTING DEFENSIVE WORKS AND CRACKING THEM. HIS PRESENCE IN THE FRENCH ARMY DURING THE FRANCO-DUTCH WAR WAS OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE, AS A SUCCESSION OF SIEGES HAD BECOME THE PRIMARY MEANS OF WAGING WAR"**



# THE ART OF THE SIEGE

Siege warfare was a defining element of the Franco-Dutch War and one name in particular stands out

**W**hether or not a 'military revolution' was underway during the Franco-Dutch War, there is certainly no doubt that warfare was changing dramatically at that time.

Medieval methods were slowly giving way to the modern, and for an extended period the two ages shared the battlefield rather awkwardly. Pikemen and musketeers fought together, side by side in both the Imperial and French armies, but gunpowder was taking control. The earlier innovations of Maurice of Nassau and King Gustavus Adolphus have been cited as kick-starting this period of innovation. Both are credited with restoring the importance of offensive tactics, but the transformation of warfare went far deeper than that.

At the heart of it was a massive increase in the scale of conflicts. Armies became bigger, control became more centralised and equipping and feeding men in the field became ruinously expensive. Nowhere was this transformation more apparent than in the field of siege warfare, and nobody was more prominent in this area than the French military engineer Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban.

## A genius for warfare

Vauban was an expert at both constructing defensive works and cracking them. His presence in the French Army during the Franco-Dutch War was of crucial importance, as a succession of sieges had become the primary means of waging war.

Battles were difficult to win, as a defeated enemy could always withdraw and live to fight another day. Towns and cities, however, could not withdraw, so ever more elaborate defensive works were constructed around them. Starting two centuries earlier, in Italy, the design of such defences had become incredibly complex by the time Vauban elevated it to an art form.

'Trace Italienne' works were highly distinctive, with an emphasis on low-lying, thick walls and multiple, overlapping fields of fire. City walls became all but impregnable to anything but a determined siege. They also became horrendously expensive, and triggered a need both for larger besieging armies and improved methods of revenue gathering.

It has been argued that the increase in the size and cost of city defences led directly to the increased centralisation of power in European states, because a robust tax system was vital if these fortifications were to be paid for.

Ironically the vast defensive walls around cities like Maastricht were not intended to stop an attacking force, but merely to slow them down. Forcing an invading army to reduce one strong point after another became a key strategy, aimed at exhausting an enemy and forcing him to the negotiating table.

Dragging out a siege was therefore the goal, but actually holding out indefinitely was next to impossible, because Vauban had elevated siegework to an art form as well.

Again building on the innovations of others (all the way back to the Romans), Vauban perfected a system whereby parallel trenches would be constructed, each one closer to the

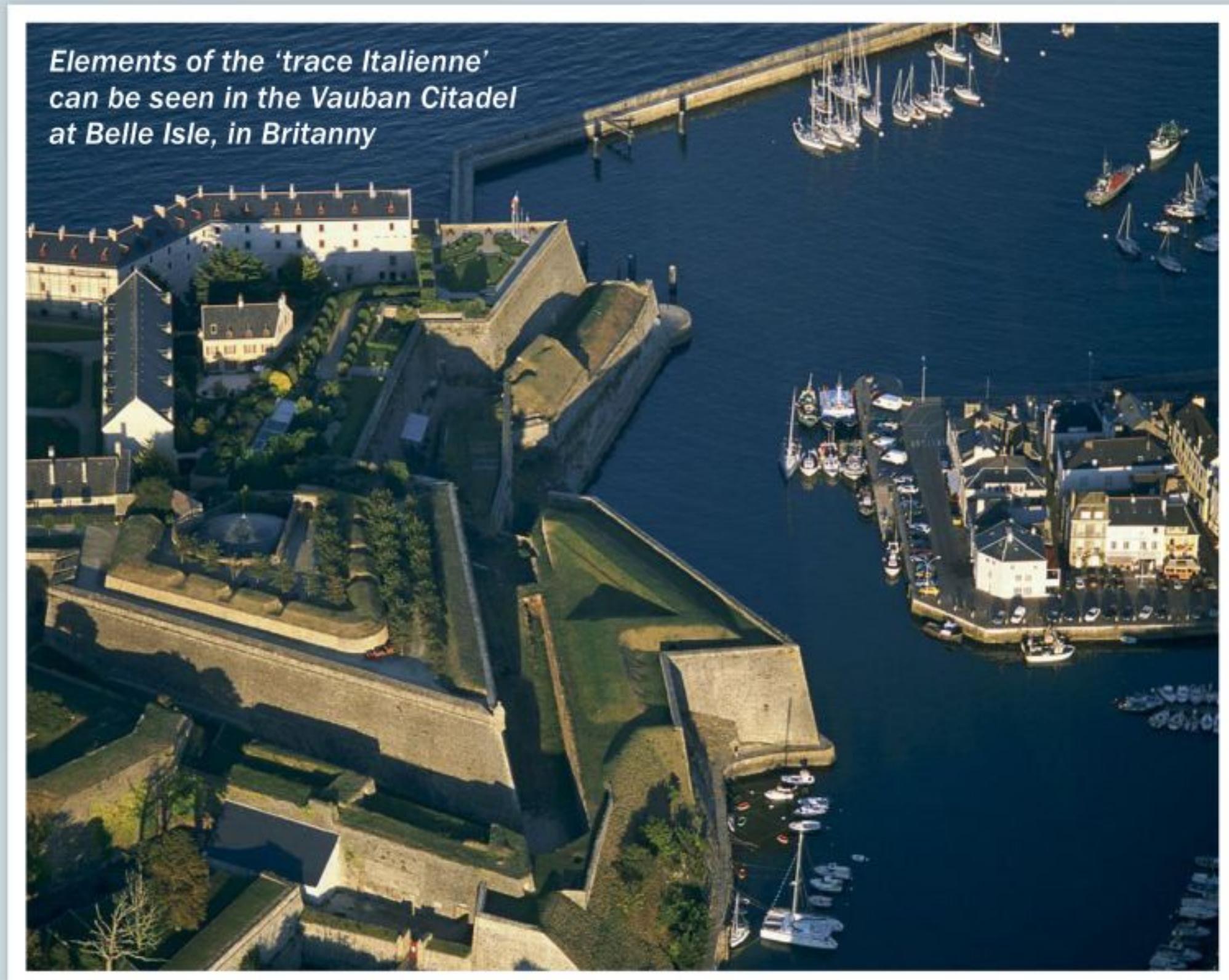
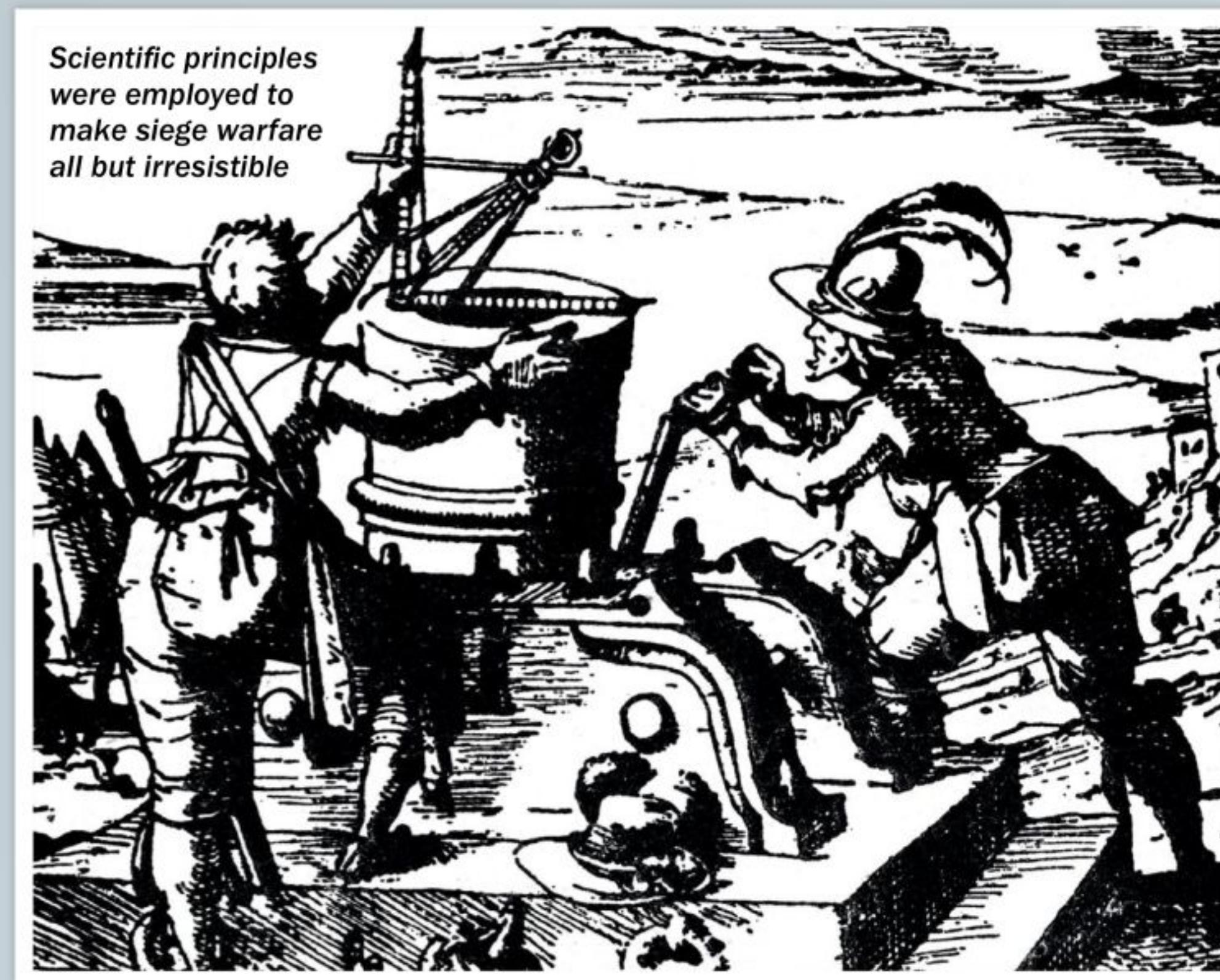
besieged city than the one before. By the time the third 'parallel' had been constructed, artillery could blow a breach in the walls and open a way into the city. A garrison would usually surrender at this point, but if it forced the attackers to mount a costly assault, then the town would be liable to pillaging in retribution.

Vauban's presence allowed the French to mount a series of successful sieges during the war and his influence grew following the death of Turenne at Sasbach in 1675. With the removal of one of the most aggressive field commanders of the era, siege warfare became even more important.

Debate still rages, however, over how revolutionary these changes were. Many have noted that the transformation of the battlefield was a gradual process that took generations to fully unfold. With that in mind, 'evolution' seems a better description than 'revolution'. There has also been debate over exactly which period deserves to be considered the most critical, with champions of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries all mounting persuasive arguments.

There is also disagreement over whether the increased scale of city defences triggered a need for bigger armies, or if armies would have expanded anyway as the European population increased.

Vauban's genius, however, has never been questioned. Although his defensive works quickly became obsolete in the face of advancements in the range and accuracy of artillery, his siege tactics remained relevant for almost three centuries.



# Frontline IN THE RANKS

Warriors in the Franco-Dutch War were at the heart of a radical battlefield transformation

## FRENCH MUSKETEER

### WARFARE WAS CHANGING AND THE MUSKETEER WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY DOMINANT

Although primitive handguns had been around for centuries, something like a musket did not appear in Europe until around 1475.

The arquebus was heavy, inaccurate and slow to load, but it paved the way for the musketeer to become the main players on the battlefield. By the time of the Franco-Dutch War the matchlock musket had replaced the arquebus. Still unwieldy, it was larger and packed a heavier punch.

Finding a place for musketeers on the battlefield became a key element in the development of

#### UNIFORM

One of the consequences of increased centralisation of power during the period was the takeover of production of military equipment by the state. Uniform dress was easier to manufacture in large quantities and thus armies began to take on a more modern appearance.

warfare in the period. Vulnerable to enemy cavalry, musketeers were initially protected by pikemen, and the vast 'tercios' of the Spanish Army mixed pikemen and musketeers in a roughly 3:1 ratio. The Spanish, although they would come to be viewed as out-dated as new developments ended the age of the tercio, possibly invented the concept of bracing a musket against the shoulder (prior to that it had been held against the chest).

As musket designs improved, especially with the later introduction of the flintlock, pike-wielding infantry eventually became obsolete. The 17th century French musketeer shown here would have fought in ranks, a system credited to Maurice of Nassau, who had his musketeers fight in ten ranks, delivering volley fire to an enemy. Disciplined volleys of musket fire from ranks of infantry would become the staple feature of battlefields until the end of the 19th century.



## GRENADIER

### COMMON TODAY, THE GRENADE WAS ONCE RESERVED FOR AN ARMY'S ELITE TROOPS

The invention of grenades required the selection of special men, brave enough to carry bombs around and throw them at the enemy. Principally they were a defensive weapon in their earliest incarnation, they were useful during sieges, where they could be lobbed at advancing troops from the safety of a parapet.

The hollow iron shells had been around for more than a hundred years by the middle of the 17th century. The French were adding four grenadiers to each company by the 1660s, switching to have a full company in each battalion by the time of the Franco-Dutch War. Each grenadier would wear a bag with around 15 grenades (also known as 'pomegranates'), and would carry a slow-burning match (the same as that used on a matchlock musket) with which to ignite the fuses. They would also carry other weaponry, including a musket and sword (and later a bayonet), allowing them to function as regular troops when their grenades ran out.

The German soldier pictured would have been selected for his strength, height and athleticism, and grenadiers remained an elite element of an army long after their distinctive weapon had become more widely employed. Their imposing physical stature meant they would often be chosen to lead assaults.

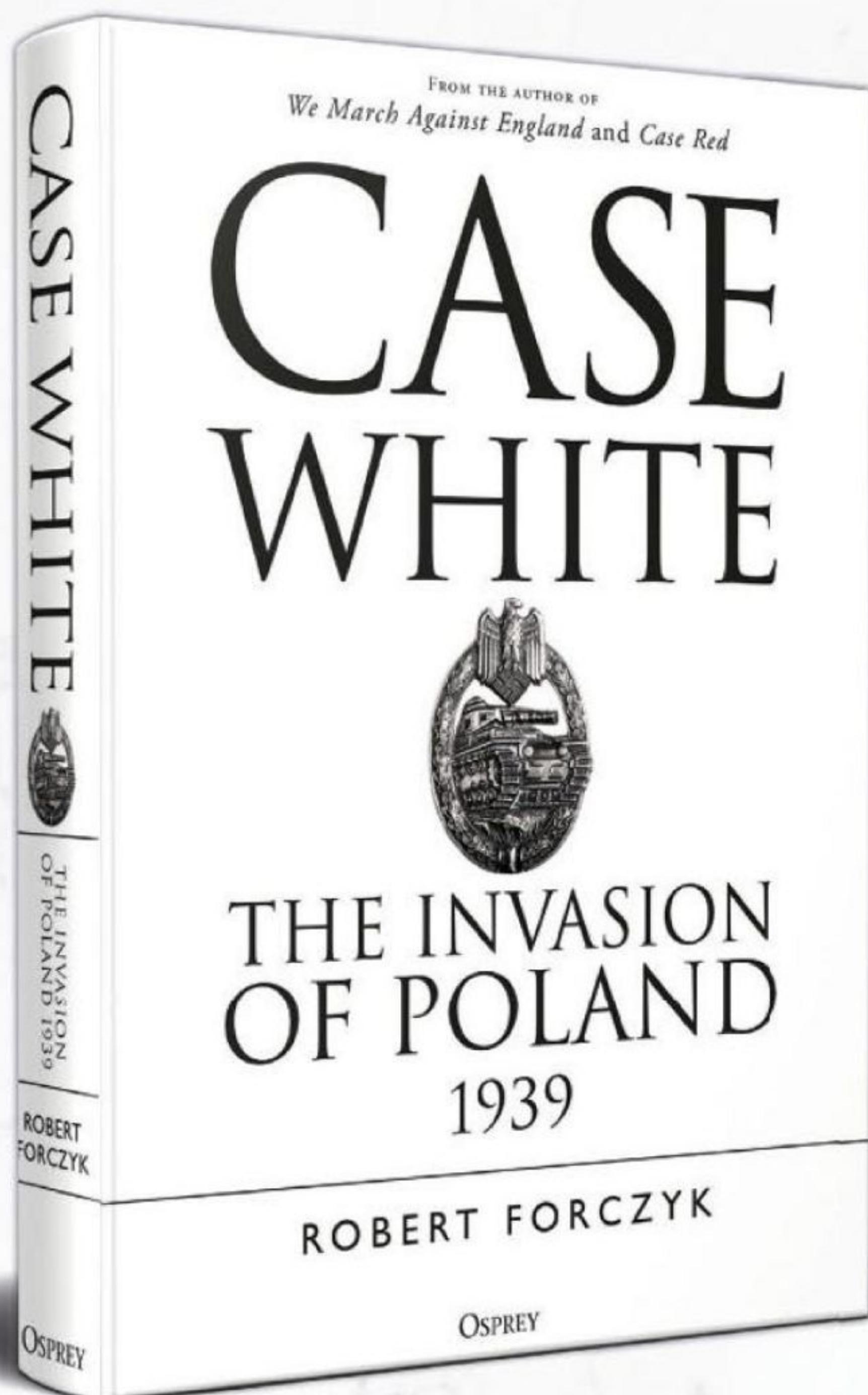
FROM THE AUTHOR OF

*We March Against England* and *Case Red*

# CASE WHITE

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## THE INVASION OF POLAND

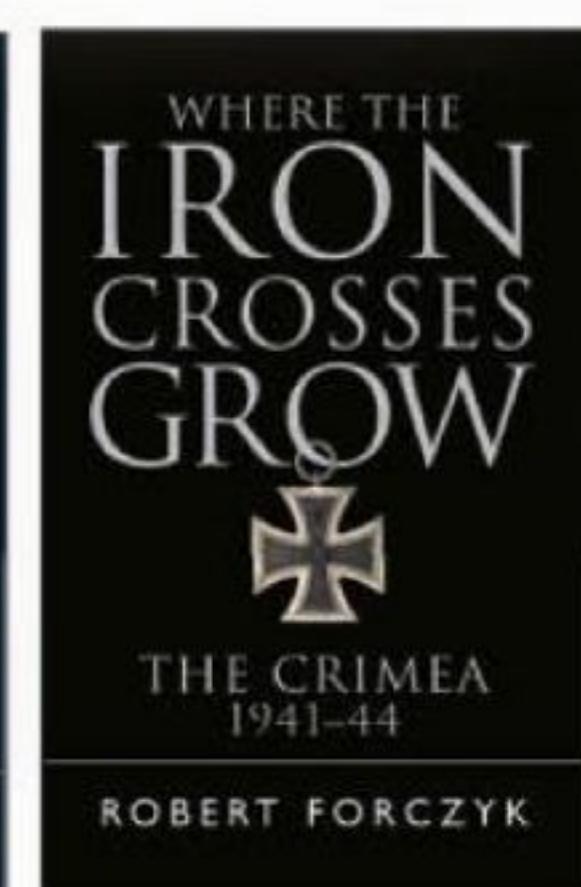
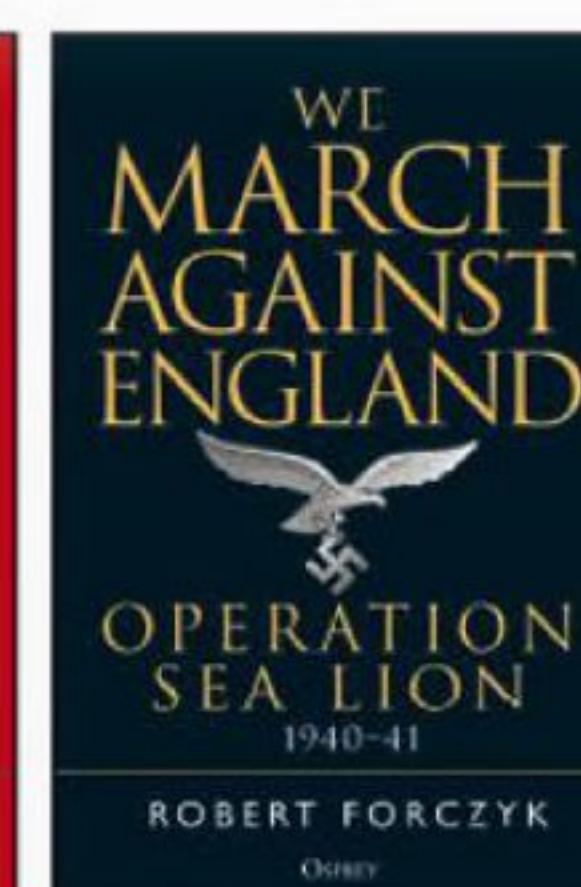
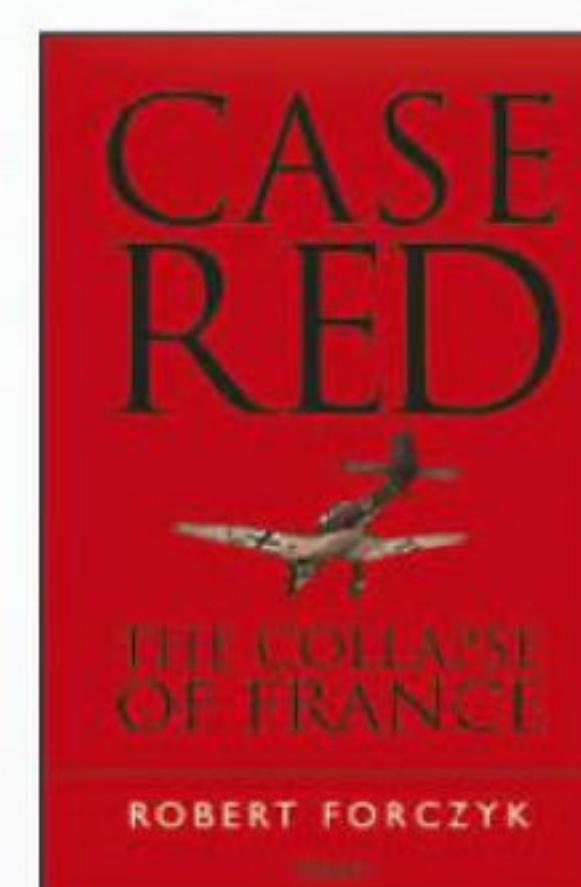


DISCOVER THE TRUE STORY OF THE  
INVASION WHICH SPARKED HISTORY'S  
GREATEST CONFLICT

In this fascinating book, renowned World War II historian Robert Forczyk shatters the many myths surrounding Germany's invasion of Poland.

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# PRINCES, MARSHALS AND MUSKETEERS

The commanders of the conflict were comprised of the most talented military minds of the 17th century

## WILLIAM III, PRINCE OF ORANGE

THE FUTURE BRITISH KING AND LOUIS XIV'S 'MORTAL ENEMY'

**1650-1702 DUTCH REPUBLIC**

Although he is most famous for leading the 'Glorious Revolution' and jointly ruling England, Scotland and Ireland with Mary II, William III's military career long preceded his exploits in Britain. The only child of William II, Prince of



Orange and a grandson of Charles I of England, William was born in The Hague and grew up as a staunch Protestant.

From 1672 William was not just prince of Orange but also the Stadholder (Steward) of several Dutch provinces. This effectively made him the de facto head of state of the Dutch Republic and he was also the Captain-General of the Dutch States Army. He came to power during one of the darkest periods in the history of the Netherlands. Known as the 'Disaster Year', the United Provinces were invaded by France, England, Münster and Cologne. French forces in particular overran much of the Republic with the exception of Friesland, Holland and Zeeland.

## "WILLIAM'S LIFE AMBITION BECAME CONTAINING THE EXPANSIONISM OF LOUIS XIV"

With only a small army William ordered the flooding of the Dutch Water Line, which blocked the French advance. His resistance confirmed his position as stadholder and William's life ambition became containing the expansionism of Louis XIV. He subsequently allied with Spain and Brandenburg and advanced his forces to Maastricht. Although he was defeated there, William showed reckless personal bravery and the Dutch Navy won several victories that forced the French to slowly withdraw from the Republic.

Between 1673-74, William had further successes when he captured Naarden and Grave while also participating in a joint attack on Bonn with Spanish and Austrian forces. These actions were not followed by great victories but by 1678 he had forced the French to conclude the Treaty of Nijmegen. Dutch territory had been saved to its pre-war borders but tensions remained unresolved between William and Louis. The latter famously referred to the future king as "my mortal enemy".

*William III aged 27 as Prince of Orange. As well as his princely title he was also stadholder of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Gelders and Overijssel*

## HENRI, VICOMTE DE TURENNE

ONE OF THE MOST DARING COMMANDERS OF THE 17TH CENTURY

**1611-75 KINGDOM OF FRANCE**

Born to a Huguenot family Henri de La Tour d'Auvergne is known to history as 'Turenne'. After serving his military apprenticeship in the Dutch States Army, Turenne became an infantry colonel in the French Army. He rose to prominence during the Thirty Years' War and was Marshal of France by 1643. Between 1672-75, he was given a secondary command but his campaigns in Germany earned him enduring fame.

In 1673 Turenne advanced far into Germany and forced Brandenburg to make peace. The following year his forces ravaged the Rhineland while he won battles at Sinzheim and Enzheim. These actions were only a prelude to his daring winter campaign of 1674-75. The French used deception to conduct a secret march in harsh weather and outflanked their enemies. After his army reappeared on the River Vosges, Turenne won a famous victory at Turckheim. Allied German forces re-crossed the Rhine and Alsace was saved for France. Turenne did not have long to enjoy his achievement because he was killed the following year during an artillery duel with Raimondo Montecuccoli at Salzbach.



*Napoleon had Turenne's remains reburied in Les Invalides and encouraged soldiers to "read and re-read" about his campaigns*

Seven ships  
of the Royal  
Netherlands  
Navy have  
been named  
after de Ruyter



## MICHEL DE RUYTER

### THE UNITED PROVINCES' CELEBRATED ADMIRAL

#### 1607-76 DUTCH REPUBLIC

A professional sailor since childhood de Ruyter initially fought in the Dutch States Army and worked as a merchant seaman before he joined the navy. He rose to become an admiral and famously humiliated the English when he commanded the 'Raid on the Medway' in 1667.

De Ruyter's greatest achievements came in the early 1670s during the overlapping Franco-Dutch War and Third Anglo-Dutch War. He won successive strategic victories over larger Anglo-French fleets at the battles of Solebay, Schooneveld and Texel, which warded off French invasions by sea. De Ruyter then took the war to the Caribbean but he was defeated when he assaulted a fort on Martinique.

After returning to Europe, de Ruyter commanded a Dutch-Spanish fleet to fight the French in the Mediterranean. He was fatally wounded at the Battle of Augusta in April 1676 and was given an elaborate state funeral the following year.

## LOUIS, GRAND CONDÉ

### A GREAT COMMANDER WHO ENDED HIS CAREER IN THE FRANCO-DUTCH WAR

#### 1621-86 KINGDOM OF FRANCE

A member of the House of Bourbon, Condé achieved great fame in his early 20s when he decisively defeated the Spanish at the Battle of Rocroi in 1643. His victory made France the dominant European power but his career changed direction when he commanded armies against French royal forces during a series of civil wars known as the 'Fronde'. He ultimately reconciled with Louis XIV and the Franco-Dutch War became his last significant period of campaigning.

Condé led the French invasion of the United Provinces in 1672 and was wounded near Arnhem. He then defended Alsace before fighting his last great battle at Seneffe against William of Orange. The engagement was inconclusive but he managed to subsequently raise the sieges of Oudenarde and Hagenau. The latter forced the Imperial army of Raimondo Montecuccoli to withdraw across the Rhine. It was Condé's last victory before gout forced his retirement.



Condé demonstrated his famous reckless bravery at the Battle of Seneffe where he had three horses killed under him

## CHARLES DE BATZ DE CASTELMORE D'ARTAGNAN

### THE REAL MUSKETEER

#### 1611-73 KINGDOM OF FRANCE

*The Three Musketeers* is one of the most famous adventure stories and follows the exploits of d'Artagnan, a young man determined to join the elite Musketeers of the Guard. The character is loosely based on a historical soldier called d'Artagnan, although his story differs from Alexandre Dumas's creation.

Although the novel is set in the 1620s, the real d'Artagnan was a guardsman from 1632 and saw action in several sieges of the Thirty Years' War. He was a Musketeer for only two years before the unit was disbanded in 1646 but he continued his active military service as a Guards officer. When the Musketeers were reinstated in 1658, d'Artagnan rose to become their captain-lieutenant in 1667. This rank made him the effective commander and he led his regiment into the Franco-Dutch War.

He was mortally wounded by a musket ball at the Siege of Maastricht during an assault. Louis XIV grieved his loss and wrote to his wife, "Madame, I have lost d'Artagnan, in whom I had the utmost confidence and who merited it in all occasions."

A statue of d'Artagnan in Maastricht. As captain-lieutenant of the Musketeers, the famous swashbuckler was second in rank only to the king of France



Images: Getty



## RAIMONDO MONTECUCCOLI

### TURENNE'S TALENTED ITALIAN RIVAL

#### 1609-1680 HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

Born near Modena, Montecuccoli joined the Imperial Army as a private serving under his uncle, who was a distinguished general. He fought in many famous engagements of the Thirty Years' War including the battles of Breitenfeld, Lützen and Nördlingen. He rose to the rank of field marshal and introduced reforms that increased the use of firearms in Imperial forces.

He was already an old man by the time of the Franco-Dutch War but he led Imperial armies against the French. Perhaps the only commander to rival Turenne, Montecuccoli outmanoeuvred him on the rivers Neckar and Rhine in 1673. He then captured Bonn and combined forces with William of Orange on the Lower Rhine.

Montecuccoli retired from the army shortly afterwards but Turenne's successes during the winter of 1674-75 led to him being recalled. He was in command when Turenne was killed at Salzbach and Imperial forces then invaded Alsace. Montecuccoli's last victory was at the Siege of Philippsburg before he finally retired.

A noted military theorist, Montecuccoli once said, "For war you need three things. One: Money. Two: Money. Three: Money"

# HUNTING THE HORN

A collage of three images. The top image shows a vintage biplane flying over water, with its reflection visible. The middle image is a battleship sailing on the ocean, with a large wake. The bottom image shows a submarine partially submerged in the water, with its conning tower above the surface.



## CHURCHILL CHRISTENED IT 'THE BEAST' AND DEMANDED IT BE DESTROYED, YET TIRPITZ REMAINED A SOLITARY AND MALEVOLENT PRESENCE IN 1944 NORWAY

WORDS LARRY PATERSON

**T**irpitz was launched on 1 April 1939, the second of two Bismarck-class battleships for the Kriegsmarine. By the time of its commissioning in February 1941, its sister-ship Bismarck was only three months from being hunted to extinction within the North Atlantic. Tirpitz, though built to the same dimensional specifications, bested its sister in size; displacing 51,800 long tons at full load due to modifications made after construction— notable were increased flak weaponry and torpedo tube installations. The largest battleship ever constructed by a European nation, Tirpitz had served briefly as flagship to a Baltic Fleet assembled to support Operation Barbarossa before despatch to Norway in November 1941. From there it could operate against Allied convoy traffic bound for the Soviet Union and serve as a 'fleet in being' requiring a countering commitment of Royal Navy units that could have been utilised elsewhere. Furthermore Hitler's paranoia of a potential Allied invasion of occupied Norway never abated, and he considered Tirpitz a major deterrent to any such attempt.

Tirpitz arrived in Trondheim during January, moving to Fættenfjord and mooring close to the fjord's cliffside in order to minimise danger from air attack. There she waited, camouflaged by netting and tree branches, protected by smoke screen generators, torpedo nets and extra anti-aircraft guns established ashore. However the battleship's activities were hindered by a perpetual shortage of fuel, several planned deployments cancelled or aborted. One such brief aborted foray against PQ12 in March used 8,230 metric tons of fuel oil, which took the Kriegsmarine three months to recoup.

Aware of its threatening presence, RAF Bomber Command made two attempts in March and April 1942 to attack Tirpitz, achieving no success for the loss of 12 aircraft. Meanwhile, after repeated successful Allied Arctic convoys, the Germans planned a show of Kriegsmarine force against PQ17, code-named Operation Rösselsprung and activated on 5 July. It was, however, short-lived. Tirpitz and cruisers Admiral Hipper and Admiral Scheer briefly sailed before being recalled, to avoid

becoming the target of British carrier aircraft. However the sheer threat of Tirpitz being at sea had caused the British Admiralty to scatter PQ17 – 21 of the convoy's 34 merchant ships were sunk by U-boats and aircraft.

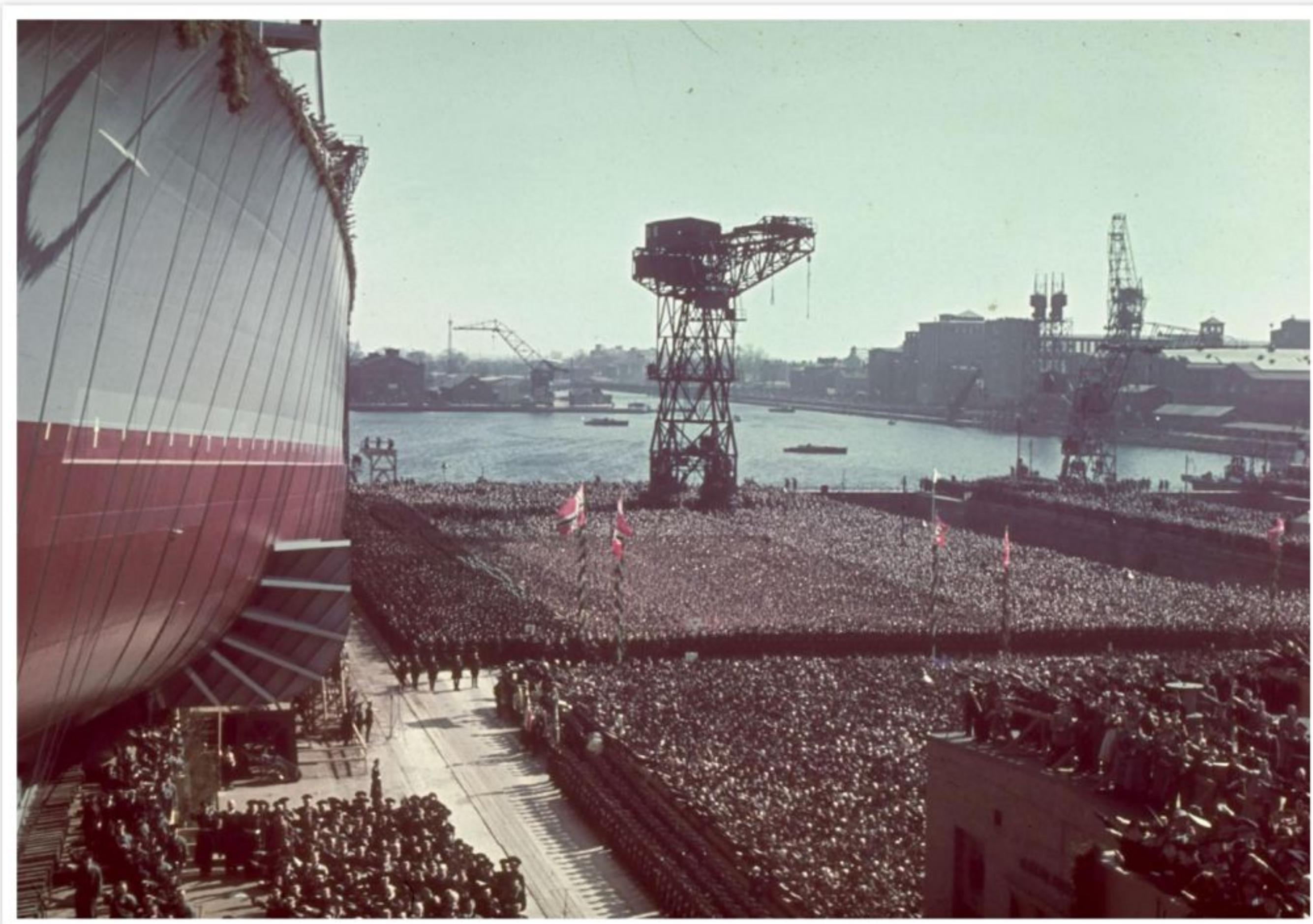
Following Rösselsprung, Tirpitz underwent major overhaul in Trondheim, forbidden by Hitler to return to Germany for fear of interception at sea. However she was not safe in Norway either and the Royal Navy designed a daring operation to neutralise Tirpitz that took place during October 1942. Operation Title comprised two Chariot 'human torpedoes' transported to Norway by the trawler Arthur under the command of Leif Larsen, a Norwegian who had escaped to England in 1940.

Towed submerged beneath the trawler's keel for the last leg of the journey through Norwegian fjords, only 16 kilometres from Tirpitz's anchorage, the Chariots broke loose in bad weather and were lost, Arthur scuttled and its personnel escaped to neutral Sweden.

By 28 December Tirpitz's overhaul had been completed and the ship engaged in sea trials, an active threat once more. Grossadmiral Karl Dönitz had decided to form a powerful surface group comprising Tirpitz, battleship Scharnhorst and cruiser Lützow with attached destroyers, for Norwegian defence and the threatening of PQ convoys. Recurrent diesel problems had forced Lützow to return to Germany for repairs, leaving only Scharnhorst and Tirpitz as the only capital ships present in Norwegian waters from September onwards. On 8 September they took part in Operation Zitronella, the sole offensive action in which Tirpitz fired its guns at a surface target. Tirpitz, Scharnhorst and nine destroyers carried an infantry regiment in a raid on Spitsbergen, the battleships shelling targets ashore and covering the landing party that successfully destroyed Norwegian installations and took 31 prisoners.

On 22 September 1943 Tirpitz, lying in Kåfjord, was disabled by charges laid beneath the ship using newly developed British X-Craft midget submarines in Operation Source. Ten X-Craft were allocated to Source, eight of them successfully reaching Kåfjord under tow by submarines. Three of the midgets – X5, X6, and X7 – successfully breached the





German defences, the latter two laying their 4,400 lb detachable amatol charges beneath Tirpitz. Though five of the deployed X-Craft were destroyed, nine crew members killed, and six others taken prisoner, the attack was a success and Tirpitz suffered significant damage. Extensive repairs were required although Dönitz again firmly resisted any plans to return the ship to Germany; Danzig and Kiel shipyards were already at capacity and ports further west were too vulnerable. Tirpitz was ordered to repair in situ and, after exceptional efforts from technicians aboard the repair ship Neumark, she was returned to fighting strength by April 1944. While Tirpitz remained out of service, Scharnhorst was lost in the disastrous Battle of the North Cape on 26 December 1943. Tirpitz, once again, remained the solitary surface threat in the north of Norway.

During April, aware of Tirpitz's serviceability, the British tested the capabilities of the developing Fleet Air Arm by launching the

first of several carrier operations against the battleship in its Kåfjord anchorage. Operation Tungsten took place on 3 April and the attacking aircraft achieved complete surprise. Twenty-one Fairey Barracudas bombed with mixed-weight armour piercing, semi-armour piercing and anti-submarine bombs, the latter capable of causing concussion damage below the waterline. Two Fleet Carriers, HMS Furious and Victorious, despatched the Barracudas escorted by Wildcat and Hellcat fighters from four accompanying escort carriers.

A full-scale bombing and firing range had been constructed at Loch Eriboll, Scotland, for rehearsing the attack and the well-prepared strike went perfectly to plan, with no sign of covering Luftwaffe fighters. In total 14 direct hits were scored despite low cloud, a smoke screen and difficulties presented by the fjord's confined airspace. While Tirpitz's main armour was not penetrated, significant damage was caused with two 15cm gun turrets destroyed,

starboard turbine disabled, fires breaking out and fire-fighting efforts adding to 2,000 tons of water that flooded through the splinter damaged hull side. All four of the ship's Arado Ar 196A-5 reconnaissance aircraft were destroyed, killing one aircraft crew member while at least 121 of Tirpitz's crew were killed and around 300 others wounded. Four British aircraft were lost and nine men killed while Tirpitz was incapacitated for three months.

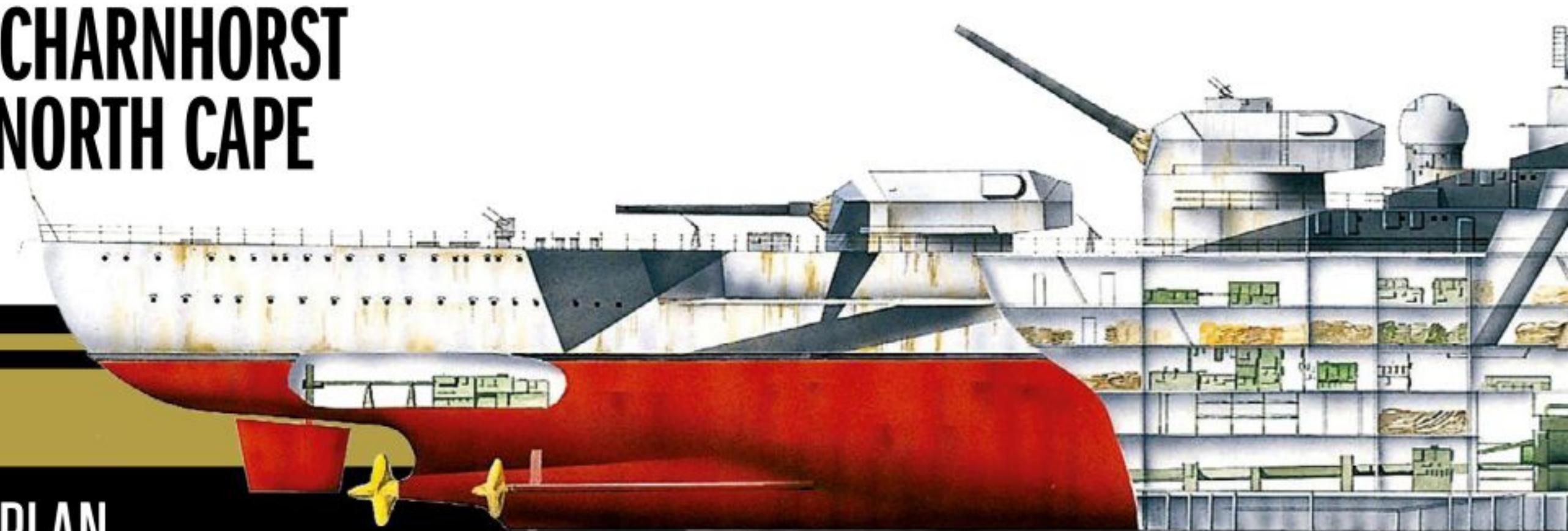
Dönitz again ordered repairs made, beginning in early May. Although the British had determined that the Fairey Barracuda lacked the bomb-carrying capacity to destroy Tirpitz, efforts to disable the ship continued, despite several planned strikes being cancelled due to poor weather conditions. By early June Tirpitz was again able to steam under its own power and further air strikes mounted by the Fleet Air Arm took place on 17 July (Mascot), 22, 24 and 29 August (the latter all encompassed in Operation Goodwood). Minor damage was

## "WHILE TIRPITZ REMAINED OUT OF SERVICE, SCHARNHORST WAS LOST IN THE DISASTROUS BATTLE OF THE NORTH CAPE ON 26 DECEMBER 1943"



### TIRPITZ'S FINAL HOURS

BOMBING RAIDS RARELY RAN AS CLOSE TO THE ORIGINAL PLAN AS OPERATION CATECHISM – THE THIRD TALLBOY RAID ON TIRPITZ BY 9 AND 617 SQUADRONS



2.59am:

- 617 Squadron Lancasters begin taking off from RAF Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire, the last of the squadron's 18 bombers airborne within 26 minutes.

3.00am:

- Eleven miles to the north at RAF Bardney, the first of 13 9-Squadron Lancasters take off; seven planned aircraft are unable to participate due to severe icing overnight.

3.24am:

- A single 463 RAAF Squadron Film Unit Lancaster takes off from RAF Waddington, carrying no bomb load.

3.25am:

- All Lancasters proceed over the North Sea individually, crossing the Norwegian coast near Namos in a plotted gap in German radar coverage. All but two successfully rendezvous over Torneträsk lake, Sweden, 138 kilometres south of Tirpitz. Two late arrivals abort their missions and return to base. Wing Commander 'Willie' Tait signals by flare gun the remainder to head to target, increasing altitude to clear mountain tops. Photo aircraft drops to 2,000 feet once past Tromsø.

9.15am:

- Tirpitz requests JG 5 scramble fighters.



German battleship Tirpitz was one of two Bismarck-class ships – among the largest at sea at the time

9.18am: ▶ 9.32am: ▶ 9.38am: ▶ 9.41am: ▶ 9.45am: ▶ 9.50am: ▶ 9.52am:

- Scramble order issued.
- Due to delays caused by landing aircraft, Ehrler takes off in the first Fw 190, headed north from Bardufoss toward Tromsø but unsure of Tirpitz's exact location.
- Tirpitz's main guns opened fire at approaching Lancasters.
- Wing Commander Tait drops the first Tallboy that hits amidships to port. Within 11 minutes the bombing is over.
- The final direct hit by the 9 Squadron aircraft piloted by Flying Officer Dougie Tweddle, acknowledged as the fatal blow.
- 'Caesar' turret magazine explodes.
- Tirpitz capsizes as the photo Lancaster flies 50 feet above the wreck to film. One 9 Squadron Lancaster is hit by anti-aircraft fire and forced to belly land in Sweden, the remainder land that afternoon in the UK, with strong winds and fuel shortages forcing several to alternate airfields.

inflicted by each attack, but German observer posts established in the outer fjord gave a minimum 14-minute warning of each attack, allowing watertight doors to be closed and prearranged 'box-fire' anti-aircraft barrages to be prepared. Thick smoke screens were generally well established by the time of the British arrival and both heavy anti-aircraft fire and low cloud ceiling reduced the effectiveness of each attack – several bombs that did strike the ship were also found to be duds.

Though Goodwood was unsuccessful, the Kriegsmarine acknowledged that the string of attacks had been mounted with great determination, dexterity, and skill. The Fleet Air Arm had also destroyed two of Tirpitz's replacement Arado floatplanes, strafed in Bukta harbour. In Berlin the threat posed to Tirpitz by enemy aircraft was now considered extreme and Luftflotte 5 was requested to urgently increase fighter coverage, but with aircraft desperately required elsewhere, the request was denied.

Meanwhile in Britain the task of destroying Tirpitz had been passed to Royal Air Force Bomber Command during August. The shortcomings of Barracuda – its slow speed and limited bomb load – was now plainly evident and initial plans were laid to utilise Mosquitos for a raid, though these came to nothing as the requisite aircraft were unavailable, fully committed to the Western Front. Instead Lancaster bombers of 9 and 617 Squadrons (both Bomber Command No. 5 Group) were earmarked for the operation; to be carried out using a combination of 12,000 lb Tallboy bombs and (initially) 'Johnny Walker' diving mines. Due to the sheer distance and heavy payloads involved, the 38 RAF bombers assigned were instructed to stage through Yagodnik airfield in the Soviet Union near Arkhangelsk, flying directly there from the United Kingdom from where accurate weather forecasts could be made before the actual raid.

Operation Paravane took place on 15 September. Group Captain Colin Campbell McMullen, commander of 9 Squadron's home airfield of RAF Bardney, was appointed overall leader of the detached Lancasters, while 617 Squadron's commanding officer, Wing Commander James Brian 'Willie' Tait, led the strike force. One 9 Squadron Lancaster was forced to abort its flight over the North Sea, another was damaged by anti-aircraft fire, and only 26 aircraft found Yagodnik in thick clouds as the remainder diverted to other airfields. Six aircraft were written off in accidents. Eventually 27 armed Lancasters and one from the Film Unit (463 Squadron) took off for Kåfjord, detected by German radar ten minutes before reaching Tirpitz. They approached at high altitude from the southeast, descending to 12,000 feet for the bomb run as the defensive smoke screen obscured most of the target below. Ferocious AA fire arced skywards, including shells fired from Tirpitz's main guns.

Leutnant Willibald Völsing remembered the attack, "We had devised 'zone shooting' for the defence and opened fire on this day with 38cm calibres at 25km. Through this, we disrupted the attack; the enemy had not expected bombardment at this distance. They scored a near hit, which damaged the forecastle

**"THICK SMOKE SCREENS WERE GENERALLY WELL ESTABLISHED BY THE TIME OF THE BRITISH ARRIVAL AND BOTH HEAVY ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE AND LOW CLOUD CEILING REDUCED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EACH ATTACK - SEVERAL BOMBS THAT DID STRIKE THE SHIP WERE ALSO FOUND TO BE DUDS"**



Lancaster of Operation  
Paravane over the smoke  
shrouded target. The attack  
disabled Tirpitz and removed  
it as an ocean-going threat



## HUNTING THE TIRPITZ

severely. From that point onwards, we could only operate at a speed of three knots – the Tirpitz could no longer be used as a battleship on the open sea. During this attack, a nine-metre-long dud dropped on the spit in front of where we were trying to anchor. At the sight of this six-ton bomb, we realised that a direct hit would mean the end for our ship."

Out of the 21 Tallboys dropped only one caused any damage, although it was enough to bring about the end of Tirpitz as a maritime threat. The bomb hit the upper bow deck to starboard, passing out of the hull through the flare of the forecastle and detonating in the water below keel level. The blast destroyed a significant portion of the forecastle, flooding the ship's forepart. Though no significant damage had been caused to Tirpitz's machinery, the structural damage could not be repaired without dry dock and thus Tirpitz could no longer take to the open sea.

The great ship was no longer a threat to Arctic convoys and had therefore ceased to be the Germans' northern 'fleet in being'.

On 30 October, the Kriegsmarine's Operations Office (SKL, Seekriegsleitung) recorded the total damage suffered by Tirpitz within its War Diary, the ship having taken on, "850m<sup>3</sup> of water, both the steering compartments becoming waterlogged but

both under control... According to examination by divers the rudder and propellers have no damage, in manual operation the starboard rudder is difficult to move. The port rudder is jammed, the cause of trouble suspected to be at the steering gear. Probably one shaft support of port shaft has been displaced.

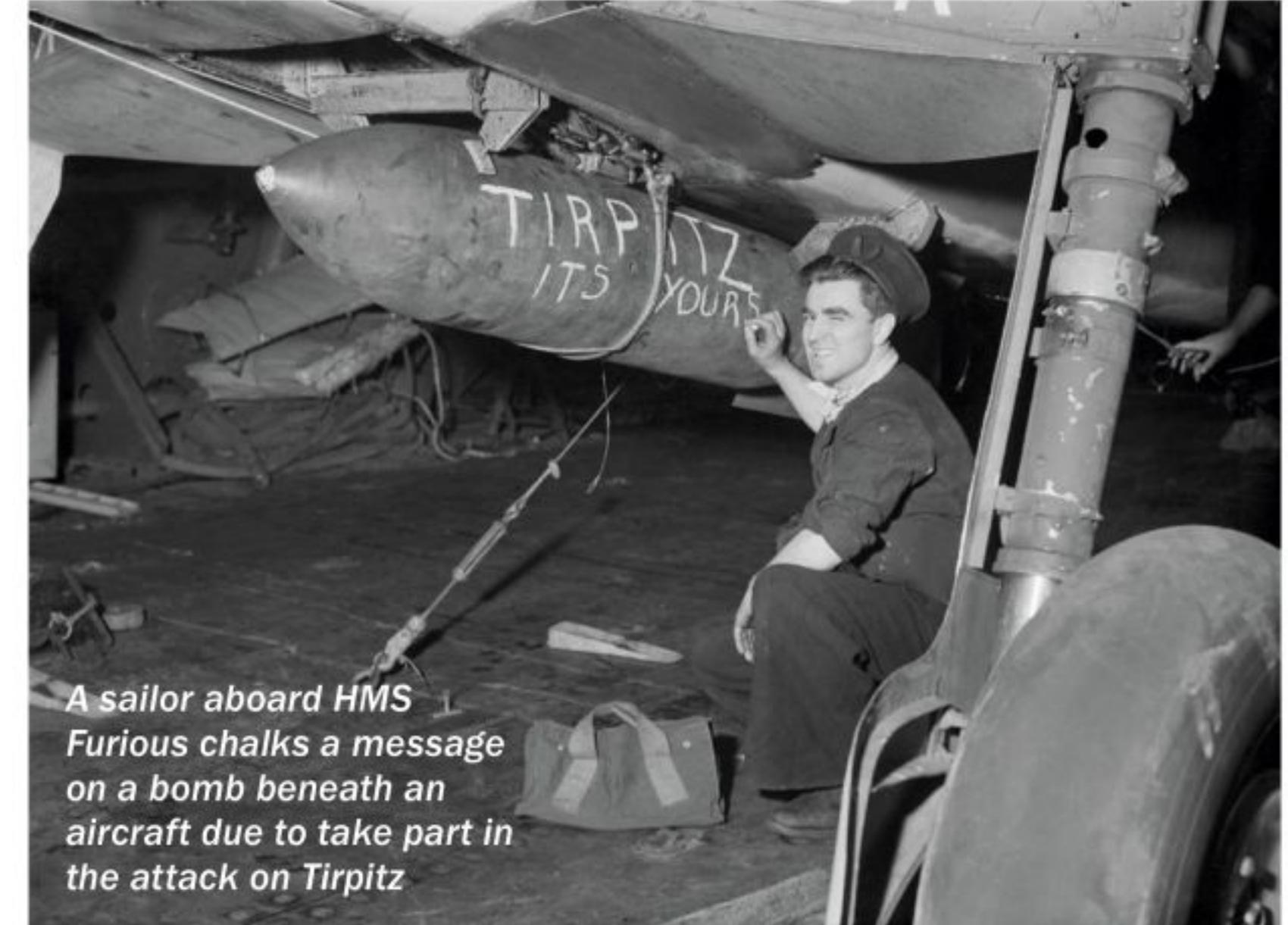
"At any rate, mobility of the ship is very questionable. One must wait to see how far the damage can be repaired. Considering the method of air attack battleship Tirpitz reports that the approach was made in wide formation which under influence of heavy and medium heavy gunfire widened more and more."

Dönitz realised that Tirpitz could no longer function as a naval threat but could instead be used as a floating battery, its fearsome main armament remaining potent. During September German forces had begun to withdraw from Finnmark following Finland's armistice with the Soviet Union. Mounting a brutally effective 'scorched earth' retreat the Wehrmacht established a new defensive line at Lyngenfjord using the mountain range's natural barrier east of Tromsø and constructing a line of fortified bunkers by use of Soviet POW forced labourers.

As Tirpitz lay too close to this new front line, during October a different anchorage was to be found, the Kriegsmarine reconnoitring four possible areas before choosing Sandnessundet

strait, next to the southern shore of Håkøya island. There it was felt that the full range of Tirpitz's artillery could be utilised for bombardment in support of nearby ground forces manning the fresh defensive line. Furthermore additional anti-aircraft guns and smoke protection due for installation could benefit the nearby port of Tromsø, while still leaving enough distance between Tirpitz and the port. However, where natural fjord contours of previous anchorages had helped shelter Tirpitz from air attack, Håkøya and the nearby land masses were flat and offered little protection. More critically perhaps, original hopes that the seabed would be shallow and firm enough to support Tirpitz in the event it was ever attacked and flooded by hull damage – allowing the ship to ground on an even keel and remain stable – it was found that not only was the water too deep for this purpose, the seabed was composed of many feet of soft mud covered by a layer of sand.

Nevertheless the transfer of Tirpitz to Sandnessundet began at 11.00am on 15 October, under the codename Operation Comet after the damaged bow had been strengthened to a degree that would allow a maximum speed of eight knots. Luftflotte 5 aircraft reconnoitred the route to be taken and with 4th Destroyer Flotilla on alert in Tver Fjord south of Silda, the



# WHERE WAS THE LUFTWAFFE?

**IN THE AFTERMATH OF TIRPITZ'S LOSS, GERMANY'S PILOTS WERE BLAMED FOR FAILING TO PROTECT THE BATTLESHIP – BUT WAS THIS ACCUSATION FAIR?**

Major Heinrich Ehrler, commander of JG 5, was accused of dereliction of duty in protecting Tirpitz. He and Oberleutnant Franz Dörr (Gruppenkommandeur of III./JG 5) were subsequently charged and tried for cowardice before the enemy. Ehrler, furthermore, was accused of possessing 'abnormal ambition' – false allegations that he had abandoned his command to claim his 200th aerial victory rather than flying protection over Tirpitz. While Dörr was acquitted, Ehrler was found guilty, initially sentenced to death, commuted on appeal to three years Festungshaft (confinement in a fortress). He was also demoted, and an imminent award of Swords to his Knight's Cross cancelled.

Ehrler provided a Luftwaffe scapegoat. Starved of many resources, fighter strength in northern Norway was negligible and unwieldy communication between Kriegsmarine and Luftwaffe due to petty jurisdictional squabbles complicated an already difficult situation.

Despite assurances to Tirpitz's officers that JG 5 was on hand for fighter cover, none of its pilots, even those with some combat experience, were familiar with their new Fw 190 fighters, and required training. Ehrler had at no point been fully briefed on Tirpitz's requirements or location, but nevertheless held his fighters at three-minute readiness in case of emergency.

As the raid occurred, communications from the scene were so sluggish that, though he



**"UNWIELDY COMMUNICATION BETWEEN KRIEGSMARINE AND LUFTWAFFE DUE TO PETTY JURISDICTIONAL SQUABBLIES COMPLICATED AN ALREADY DIFFICULT SITUATION"**

was airborne as it happened, he was far from Sandnessundet, sighting the distant mushroom cloud of exploding Tallboys too late to intervene.

A further enquiry eventually exonerated Ehrler and on 1 March 1945, Hitler officially pardoned him, offering the chance to "rehabilitate himself" in combat. He was reassigned to a Messerschmitt Me 262 Geschwader (JG 7) and on 4 April 1945 claimed his last three victories shooting down two Allied bombers and destroying a third by ramming after exhausting his ammunition.

*Heinrich Ehrler (centre) of JG 5 photographed in 1943 in Finland. He would become the Luftwaffe's scapegoat for the Tirpitz disaster*





*Tirpitz after receiving serious damage to its forecastle from Lancaster of Operation Paravane*

battleship departed in company with heavy floating anti-aircraft artillery batteries Nymphe and Thetis and under strong escort. The anti-aircraft and smoke defences at Kåfjord were to be dismantled and rebuilt at the new anchorage, Tirpitz retaining all of its own anti-aircraft artillery aboard. "Thus", the SKL recorded, "the ship is not to be considered as a floating battery, but rather as a Monitor."

Tirpitz reached its new anchorage at 3.00pm on 16 October, whereupon approximately 600 men – the majority of them engine room personnel – were removed, leaving about 1,700 crew members still aboard. Torpedo nets were strung, the space required by them meaning that Tirpitz was forced to lay in slightly deeper water offshore of Håkøya island than originally planned. A dredger was swiftly despatched to provide material for deposit beneath the keel, but it would prove too little and too late.

Tirpitz's new location was reported by Norwegian resistance, confirmed by RAF Mosquito reconnaissance and a second raid by 9 and 617 Squadron Lancasters was mounted on 29 October. Thirty-nine Tallboy-armed Lancasters from the two squadrons, again accompanied by a photo Lancaster of 463 Squadron, launched Operation Obviate, ironically foiled by cloud cover over Tirpitz whose smoke generators were not yet operational. Not a single bomb hit the concealed battleship, though a near miss off the port quarter damaged the port shaft and rudder and caused some flooding, injuring three men.

## "THE NOISE WAS INDESCRIBABLE, AND IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL SHOTS FROM DIFFERENT CALIBRES. THE NOISE INCREASED EVEN MORE AS A GREAT SHAKING RAN THROUGH THE SHIP"

On Tirpitz the generally low state of morale raised somewhat as the crew believed their own anti-aircraft fire had prevented British success. Though no Luftwaffe fighters had been present at the time, news also soon reached Tirpitz of the arrival of Focke Wulf Fw 190 fighters of Jagdgeschwader 5 moving to Bardufoss, under the command of Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves holder Major Heinrich Ehrler. However, unbeknownst to the battleship officers and crew, JG 5 had been evacuated from Kirkenes during the retreat from Finnmark and was composed of largely inexperienced pilots, unfamiliar with the Focke Wulf.

The Geschwader was in a state of disarray and Ehrler himself had not even been fully briefed on Tirpitz's location, nor his apparently key role in its protection.

In Britain news that Tirpitz had only been slightly damaged was soon received and determination to launch an identical raid as soon as possible led to Operation Catechism mounted by the same two Lancaster squadrons equipped again with Tallboys. Thirty-two Lancasters took off from Lincolnshire in early morning darkness

of 12 November 1944 and arrived over Tirpitz at 9.41am when the first bombs were dropped. Though heavy anti-aircraft fire greeted the bombers as Tirpitz had received ample warning of their approach, there were still no functioning smoke screen generators and visibility was perfect. Eight minutes later, the last bomb had fallen – two direct hits impacting the ship and one landing alongside. Gunner Klaus Rohwedder was beneath the bombs, "The aeroplanes flew in close formation from starboard. We expected the arctic sea fighters from Bardufoss to take action against the Lancaster bombers, but nothing happened, even though their take-off had been announced through the ship's loudspeakers. There was fear in everyone's eyes as we sensed that this might be our last day.

"After the heavy artillery had opened fire and the first volley had detonated beneath the enemy formation, the formation drifted apart, though keeping their attack course.

"We received permission to fire as the formation came closer and the anxiety I had experienced disappeared. I caught a glimpse of a large bomb being released from the lower



*Above: The Tirpitz memorial facing its final resting place, next to the southern shore of Håkøya island*



*Joint Norwegian and German salvage of the upturned Tirpitz begins in 1949*

body of an aircraft, following the path of the aircraft for a short while and then disappearing from view. It then reappeared as a shadow, quite a distance from the ship, dived into the sea with a splash and sent an enormous wall of water skywards. I could not see the effect of our defensive fire. The light anti-aircraft guns were now also firing at the enemy formation, although it was beyond their reach.

"The noise was indescribable, and it was impossible to distinguish between individual shots from different calibres. The noise increased even more as a great shaking ran through the ship. This was the first strike on port side. Large amounts of water came down on us. The second strike I did not even notice as the ship immediately tilted to port side.

"The ammunition men also could no longer reach the gun. In the meantime, the heeling had become so strong that I could not load the pipe anymore. The ammunition fell out of the standby locker and tumbled over the aeroplane deck into the water. By this time, we were no longer able to stand upright on deck and had to hold on to the rail. The gunfire died away and, only occasional shots were still being fired."

One Tallboy landed to the port of 'Bruno' turret and did not explode, the second – dropped by Tait's aircraft – striking amidships to port and detonating over the boiler room causing severe damage and extensive flooding which produced a strong list. A third may have hit the armoured deck near 'Caesar' turret, possibly detonating a magazine as the entire



*Wing Commander James Brian 'Willie' Tait of RAF 617 Squadron gives his account of the sinking of Tirpitz in a press conference*

huge armoured structure was blown clear of the ship onto men already overboard and struggling in the water. The remainder were near misses, almost all to port of the ship, blowing away the dredged material that had been placed below the keel. Tirpitz's captain, 39-year-old Kapitän zur See Robert Weber, ordered the lower ship evacuated as the list to port reached nearly 40 degrees. Five minutes later, at 9.50am, as the list worsened, he ordered the ship abandoned, Tirpitz finally rolling over and capsizing within the next two minutes.

Petty Officer Ernst Renner was in the ammunition room of a 15cm turret, "A giant column of water pushed into the tower and the man in front of me fell right into this surge. He was carried away by the water, washed into the tower and did not make another sound. He died instantly. Horrified, I screamed to the others, 'Quick, quick, back to the ammunition room'. We climbed back as fast as we could – now upwards since the ship had turned by 180 degrees. The emergency lighting was still on – that was quite a feeling. We crouched in a room that was half filled with water. Then the light went out. Someone had a torch, so we were able to find our orientation in an emergency. We were afraid that the steam boilers in the nearby boiler room could explode. One comrade hugged me and said, 'Ernst, now we all have to die – now I will never see my mum again'. Above us there was an empty fuel cell. An oval manhole cover was located directly above us. We were now in an air bubble above the water level.

"Fortunately for us, the fuel cell was empty. With a lot of effort and an adjustable screw wrench, a so-called 'French', we managed to open the manhole cover. When all screws had finally been loosened, the cover fell with a terrible bang. Then a few comrades climbed into the cell and started knocking against the walls. After some time we heard knocking and steps from outside. When the knocking was directly above us, we were just about able to communicate with our saviours.

"They told us to remain calm and not to talk, so as to save air. Outside, our saviours were working feverishly. It took ages for the flame cutters to penetrate the steel wall."

Tirpitz was no more. Of the crew, 596 swam to shore or were picked up, while a further 87 were later cut free from the upturned hull. Emergency lighting within the capsized ship only lasted for six hours, any remaining time spent in darkness with rising cold water and dwindling oxygen. Such rescue efforts were suspended after 24 hours as available oxygen inside the hull was considered expended. The exact number of casualties remains unknown, estimates ranging between 940 and 1,204 men killed, including the captain. The following morning, British Air Vice Marshal R. A. Cochrane – head of Bomber Command No. 5 Group which had destroyed Tirpitz – announced to his staff that "the 'beast' had finally been slain after five years of tremendous efforts". The last German surface threat in Norway had been removed; Churchill's mortal menace removed.

## BASIL THE BULGAR SLAYER

Byzantine cataphracts did not charge, but advanced at a steady trot against enemy formations already weakened by archers

## BASIL THE BULGAR SLAYER

Byzantine Emperor Basil II is shown wearing a ceremonial costume consisting of a gold-coloured armoured corselet and armbands. The corselet is worn over an imperial purple robe. He is often depicted being crowned by angels while Christ watches over him from above and his subjects are prostrate at his feet.

Basil was a gifted military commander, skilled diplomat, and able administrator. Through vigorous campaigning, he expanded the Byzantine Empire to its greatest extent since the time of Justinian I in the 6th century.

Image: Art Agency



# BASIL THE BULGAR SLAYER



Basil II waged total war against rival Tsar Samuel of the Bulgarians whose aggression posed a mortal threat to the Byzantine Empire

WORDS WILLIAM E. WELSH

**H**undreds of brawny Varangians surged against the camp of the Byzantine pretender Bardas Phokas the Younger at Chrysopolis on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus – it was first light in late February, 989CE.

Led by 30-year-old Emperor Basil II, the Vikings had slipped across the strait under the cover of darkness the previous night. Before the rebels could form up, the bloodthirsty Varangians waded into the disordered mob swinging their swords and battleaxes.

After butchering the rebels, the Varangians presented Basil with three captured leaders. Basil then ordered the three men to be hanged, impaled, and crucified.

The massacre at Chrysopolis was a key episode in the second civil war that occurred during Basil's reign. Phokas, who was not present at Chrysopolis, had more rebels a short distance south at Abydos on the Hellespont. This meant Basil and his Varangians had more work to do to crush the rebellion.

## Unstable realm

Basil was crowned emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, also known as the Byzantine Empire, at the age of 18 upon the death of John I Tzimiskes in January 976.

Despite his shortness in stature, the young emperor had a robust constitution that would serve him well in the long campaigns he would undertake in his prime years.

As a result of the impressive conquests of his two predecessors, Nikephoros II Phokas and Tzimiskes, Basil inherited a realm more powerful than its rivals. Basil initially was unable to expand upon its gains because for the first 13 years of his reign he was bogged down defending his throne against the attacks by two former generals, each of whom believed he would make a better emperor. These two magnates, Phokas and Bardas Sclerus, derived their wealth from their vast estates in Anatolia.

The first civil war erupted in 976 when Sclerus was removed from command of Byzantine forces on the eastern frontier. Upset at being dismissed, Sclerus declared himself emperor in 976. It took three years to stamp out his rebellion.

## Bulgar uprising

While the bulk of Byzantine forces were bogged down fighting Sclerus's rebels, self-proclaimed Western Bulgarian Tsar Samuel Cometopoulos took advantage of the situation by invading the Byzantine Theme (district) of Thessaly. Samuel had risen to power in the vacuum created by the Byzantine defeat of the Danube Bulgars during the reign of John I Tzimiskes. Samuel's capital was situated on Lake Prespa in Macedonia.

Samuel besieged the Thessalian capital of Larissa in 985, and it fell to his forces the following year. He drafted the hardiest

men into his army and sold the rest of the inhabitants into slavery. He then raided deep into the Byzantine themes of Hellas and the Peloponnesus in search of plunder.

Basil mobilised his forces for an expedition into Bulgaria. He planned to lead the invasion in person to further his military experience.

## A bitter lesson

Basil would wage war intermittently over the course of three decades against Tsar Samuel. His first incursion into Bulgaria occurred in July 986. Basil's initial objective was the town of Sardica (Sofia) in Eastern Bulgaria. From Adrianople, the Byzantine army marched west along the Maritsa River and then turned north, crossing the Sredna Gora Mountains by way of Trajan's Gate. Basil besieged Sardica on 26 July.

The Byzantine emperor soon realised that his army lacked sufficient provisions for a

*Below: Patriarch Polyeuctus of Constantinople leads the coronation of Byzantine Emperor Basil II*



**"THE BULGAR STREAMED DOWN FROM THE HILLTOPS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE DEFILE. THE ROUT WAS SWIFT AND COMPLETE; HOWEVER BASIL ESCAPED ON HORSEBACK. BACK IN CONSTANTINOPLE, HE VOWED TO GET REVENGE AGAINST SAMUEL"**

## BASIL THE BULGAR SLAYER

*Emperor Basil II fought many campaigns against the Bulgars, completing his conquest of Bulgaria in 1018.*





*The Byzantines under General Nikephoros Ouranos slay the Bulgarians at the Battle of Spercheios*

lengthy siege and that his artillery corps was incompetent. Basil raised the siege on 15 August and then withdrew along the same route by which he had arrived.

While the siege was under way, Samuel's army had arrived by forced marches from Thessaly. As the Byzantines began their withdrawal, Samuel laid an ambush at Trajan's Gate.

When the Byzantine army entered the pass on 17 August, the Bulgar streamed down from the hilltops on both sides of the defile. The rout was swift and complete; however Basil escaped on horseback. Back in Constantinople, Basil vowed to get revenge against Samuel.

### Second civil war

Phokas, who was the nephew of an earlier Byzantine emperor, Nicephorus II, had a burning desire to be emperor. He proclaimed himself emperor in 987 and marched on Constantinople.

Basil was reluctant to recall his troops from Thrace where they were attempting to contain Bulgar expansion eastward. He decided to ask Prince Vladimir of Kiev for military assistance. The prince had recently visited Constantinople, and he was favourably disposed towards the Byzantines.

Envoy from Constantinople travelled to the Byzantine colony of Cherson on the Dnieper River. Vladimir, who met with them in that location, offered to send 6,000 Varangians. In return for the troops he wanted Basil's sister, Princess Anna, as his bride. Basil agreed.

The Varangians set sail from Cherson in December 988, and before the end of the month they had weighed anchor in the Golden Horn.

After the loss of his detachment at Chrysopolis, Phokas besieged the town of Abydos with his remaining troops. He hoped to find enough boats at that location to ferry his troops across the Sea of Marmara for an attack on Constantinople.

Basil had no intention of allowing Abydos to fall. In late March he led the Varangians across the straits a second time. They landed a few miles north of Abydos at Lampascus.

### "IN RETURN FOR THE TROOPS HE WANTED BASIL'S SISTER, PRINCESS ANNA, AS HIS BRIDE. BASIL AGREED"

Phokas fell dead from a stroke in the midst of a battle fought on 13 April. His death ended the second civil war.

When Basil tried to avoid sending his sister to become Vladimir's bride, the Kievan prince took possession of Cherson. When Basil finally sent his sister to Kiev, Vladimir withdrew his troops from Cherson.

### Balkan campaign

After the conclusion of the second civil war in 989, Basil once again turned his attention to the Bulgars. He spent nearly two years overhauling his army. His commanders drilled his men and he inspected them regularly to monitor their progress.

Once these tasks were completed the Byzantine emperor led his troops in spring 991 into Thessaly. One of his top priorities was to recover the Byzantine towns in Thessaly. One by one he liberated them. Those towns that showed themselves favourable to returning to the Byzantine fold he garrisoned, but if the inhabitants of a town resisted the Byzantines, he razed the town leaving it a smoking ruin.

Basil knew the campaign of reconquest would be a long one, but he resolved to proceed slowly and methodically. He intended to maintain steady pressure on Tsar Samuel, therefore forcing him to fall back in the face of the larger Byzantine army.

### Crisis in Syria

While campaigning against Samuel, Basil received an urgent message in 995 from the Emir of Aleppo who was a Byzantine vassal. The emir said that his city was

besieged by an Egyptian Fatimid army. He informed Basil that if help did not arrive soon, it would fall to the Egyptians.

Basil faced a quandary. If his army marched overland on foot, Aleppo might fall before it arrived. In a stroke of pure genius he decided to mount his entire army so that it might move swiftly to the rescue of Aleppo and also prevent the Egyptians from threatening Byzantine Antioch as well. Basil gave every infantryman two mules, one to ride and one to carry his equipment.

Basil then led his 17,000-man force on a forced march to Syria. The Byzantine troops arrived in April 995 after covering 600 miles in 26 days. After saving Aleppo and recovering northern Syria, Basil chased the retreating Egyptians as far south as Tripoli before breaking off his pursuit. As a result Aleppo remained in Byzantine hands.

### Basil's revenge

While Basil was engaged in the east, the Byzantine general had won a key victory over Tsar Samuel on the Spercheios River in Greece that put an end to Bulgar raids into both Hellas and the Peloponnesus.

Basil returned to the battlefield in Bulgaria in 1000. Over the course of the next four years he conquered Eastern Bulgaria and garrisoned its towns. Afterwards, Basil fought his way to Skopje in northern Macedonia. When Basil reached Skopje the two opposing armies faced each other across the Vardar River which flowed through the town. In a well-executed sneak attack the Byzantine army forded the river under cover of night. The Byzantines fell upon the Bulgarians at first light and routed them.

By 1014 Basil had secured northern, central, and eastern Bulgaria. However he still needed a decisive victory that would result in the capture or death of Samuel. That year Basil marched against Western Bulgaria from the south.

The Byzantine advance ground to a halt when they encountered the Bulgarian army in a blocking position in the primary mountain pass leading through the Belasitsa Mountains

## BASIL THE BULGAR SLAYER

Emperor Basil II (left), holding a lance and shield, sends his troops in pursuit of the defeated King of Georgia



near Kleidion. Basil instructed his second-in-command, General Nicephorus Xiphias, to march half of the army around the Bulgarian flank in order to strike the Bulgarians in the rear. Basil would remain facing the Bulgarians to prevent them from escaping to the south. Xiphias's attack on 29 July took the Bulgarians by surprise. In the rout that unfolded at the Battle of Kleidion, 15,000 Bulgarians were slain and 15,000 captured.

Basil then ordered his troops to blind each one of the captured soldiers. Specifically, he ordered the eyes of 99 of every 100 men to be blinded. He left the remaining soldier in each group of 100 with one eye in order to lead his fellows back to their tsar.

The blinded men made slow and solemn progress in their gloomy march back to

their master. In early October they arrived at Samuel's castle to show him the fate that had befallen them.

Samuel was already ill at the time, and the spectacle of his loyal troops horribly mutilated proved too much for him in his feeble condition. He died on 6 October. For his brutal conquest of Samuel's empire in which many Bulgars perished, Basil was given the designation 'Bulgar Slayer'.

The Byzantines spent the next four years mopping up the remaining resistance in Bulgaria. Through his overwhelming victory over the Bulgarians Basil was able to expand further north in the Balkans. The Byzantines acquired all of the land south of the middle and lower Danube, including the principalities of Serbia, Bosnia, and Croatia.

*The cavalry component of the Byzantine army was more prominent than it had been in the Roman Empire*



### Expansion in the east

After the war in the west was over, Basil had a pressing score to settle with King Giorgi I of the Caucasian Christian kingdom of Georgia. Giorgi had invaded, with the aid of the Armenians, the Byzantine-controlled principalities of Tao and Phasiane. The Byzantines valued these lands from an economic standpoint because key trade routes passed through them.

In 1021 Basil embarked on what would be his last expedition to the east to compel Giorgi to relinquish these lands. He led his armies as far as Iberia in the Caucasus region. Basil preferred to use diplomacy to settle matters with the Georgians and Armenians. Realising that Basil was stronger than he was, Giorgi capitulated. While he was in the region, Basil persuaded King John Smbat III of Bagratuni Armenia to bequeath his entire kingdom to the Byzantines upon his death.

From the lands acquired from these agreements, Basil then established eight new themes for the empire. These provinces stretched in a swooping arc from Antioch in the south to the Caucasus further north-east.

After he returned from the east, Basil turned his attention to the Byzantine Catepanate of Italy. The 69-year-old emperor was in the process of making plans to invade Arab-controlled Sicily when he died on 15 December 1025 in Constantinople.

Basil had ruled the empire for nearly half a century. At the time of his death, the Byzantine Empire stretched from the Upper Mesopotamia to Italy. The Byzantine Empire would never again reach so high a pinnacle.

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# “I FELT NO PITY”



## INTERVIEW WITH A FEMALE SOVIET SNIPER

YULIA ZHUKOVA WAS ONE OF THE RED ARMY'S UNIQUE SHARPSHOOTERS WHO FOUGHT ON THE EASTERN FRONT DURING WORLD WAR II

WORDS TOM GARNER

Above: Zhukova pictured after she was presented with her first medal 'For Bravery' upon her return home to Uralsk, 1945

Main image: Snipers take aim on the Kalinin Front, 1 July 1943



**D**uring WWII over 800,000 women served in the armed forces of the Soviet Union. Although most acted as medics or nurses, many also served as combatants. Their roles ranged from pilots, tank crew members and machine-gunners but female personnel were also formidable snipers. The most famous female sniper of the war, Lyudmila Pavlichenko, was credited with 309 kills in a relatively short period between August 1941-June 1942. This included 36 enemy snipers and her totally made her one of the deadliest snipers in military history. As Pavlichenko explained, "We mowed down Hitlerites like ripe grain."

Because of the success of individual sharpshooters like Pavlichenko, women were officially approved to be trained as snipers in December 1942. From May 1943 recruits were trained at what eventually became known as the Central Women's Sniper School.

By the end of the war 1,885 female snipers had graduated from this institution into the Red Army. Between them these indomitable soldiers were crack shots who achieved approximately 10,000-12,000 kills.

Nevertheless these women fought in horrendous conditions across the Eastern Front and many were killed, either in combat or in gruesome circumstances if they were captured by vengeful German forces. One of those who survived was Junior Sergeant Yulia Konstantinovna Zhukova.

Aged only 18 when she joined the Red Army, Zhukova saw extensive action during the Soviet advance into East Prussia between November 1944-May 1945. She was still in her teens when her military service ended and is now a highly decorated veteran.

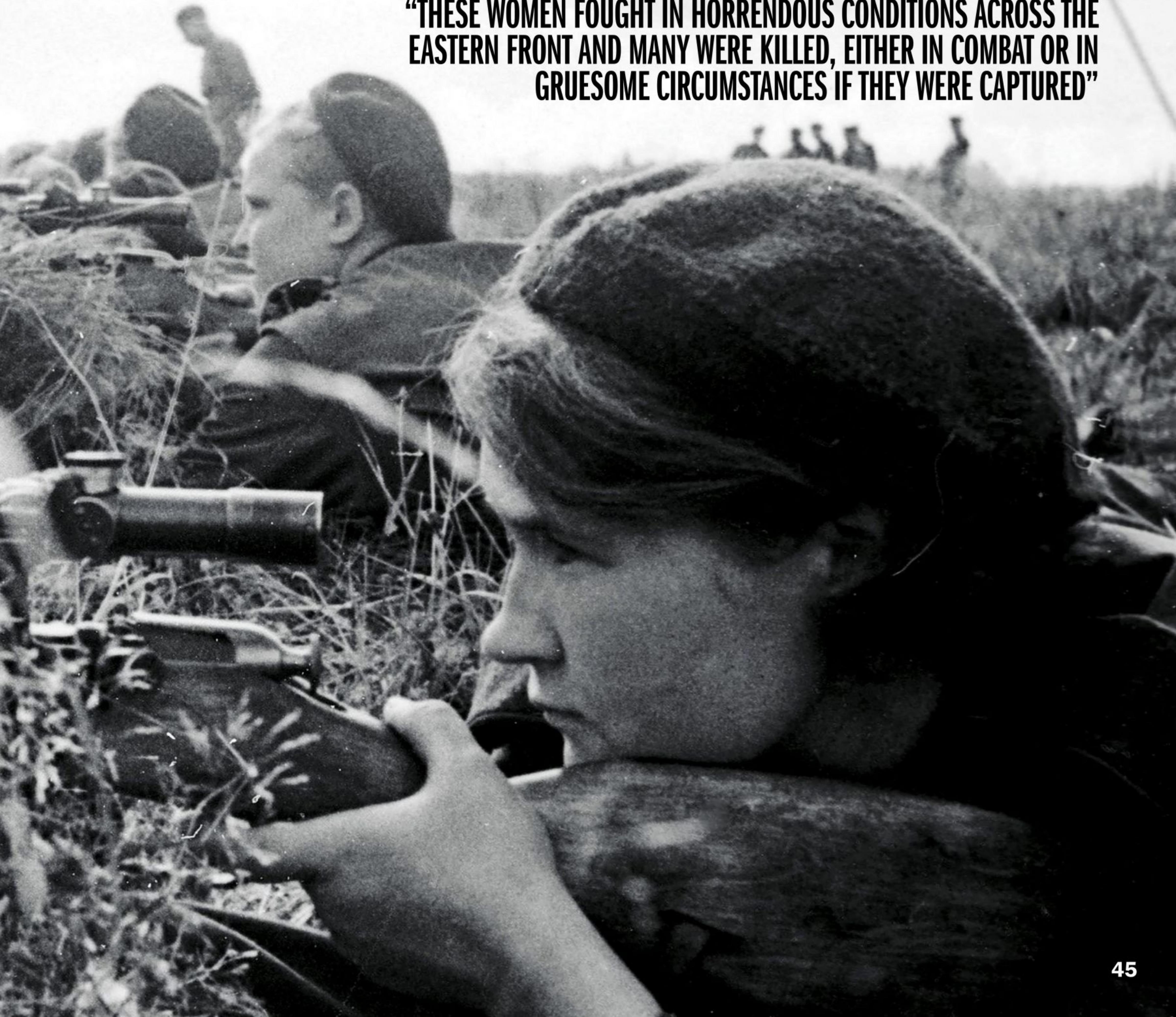
Zhukova recalls in vivid detail her short, sharp military career from trench combat, killing the enemy, advancing into hostile territory

and enduring some of the worst conditions of the Second World War. Most importantly, it is a unique perspective of a patriotic woman determinedly fighting in a warzone dominated by the brutality of men.

### **"The will to victory"**

Born in February 1926 in Uralsk (now Oral, Kazakhstan), Zhukova clearly remembers the day the Soviet Union went to war with Nazi Germany, "I shall never forget 22 June 1941. It was a magnificent day – fine, warm and sunny and we had just completed our schooling. We had gathered near our school to see off one of our friends on vacation when a woman came up with tears in her eyes. She said, 'Children, where are you off to? The war's started!'. Her words seemed so absurd that we didn't pay any attention. Of course, we were not aware how serious the war was, what a tragedy it would be for our country and how many lives it would cost.

**"THESE WOMEN FOUGHT IN HORRENDOUS CONDITIONS ACROSS THE EASTERN FRONT AND MANY WERE KILLED, EITHER IN COMBAT OR IN GRUESOME CIRCUMSTANCES IF THEY WERE CAPTURED"**



## THE SOVIET SNIPER

I was confident that we would be victorious but at home it was all gloom and tears."

Zhukova came from a staunchly patriotic Soviet family and she initially volunteered to work in an engineering factory to assist the war effort. Working in harsh conditions, she was hospitalised with typhus but was still determined to join the Red Army, "I found out that there were two-week courses in basic military training for girls in Uralsk and decided it was time to attend them. The young generation really wanted

to help our country overcome the Nazis. Due to this training I was able to join the Red Army as a volunteer, although I was still under 18. Along with a few other girls from Uralsk who had been called up, I was directed to the Central Women's Sniping School."

Located at Siliatnaya near Podolsk, the school was run by Captain Nora Pavlovna Chegodaieva and Zhukova was part of a draft that trained between April and November 1944. She was the youngest recruit and her

training was extremely thorough, "Every day we were drilled, taught to march and perform the necessary techniques with a rifle. We were supposed to know by heart the Red Army regulations and the ins and outs of all types of firearms – rifles, pistols, and both machine guns and submachine guns.

"We were taught how to set up fox-holes, camouflage ourselves, crawl on our elbows and sit in hideouts for lengthy periods."

The sniper training in particular was highly detailed, "It was shooting, shooting and more shooting. There were special exercises to improve our powers of observation and memory, sharpen our vision and develop firmness of hand. We fired at targets from full, waist and chest height – at both moving and stationary targets, open and camouflaged. We fired standing, lying and kneeling, with and without support for the rifle, on the move and standing still. A whole day of running, crawling and shooting took so much energy that you just wanted to drop and go to sleep."

As well as the rigorous practical training, patriotism was further instilled into the already keen women, "This was a 'Patriotic War' and young and old people all combatted the invaders. Patriotic education was another side of the cadets' training. In the classroom we were constantly reminded of the country's heroic past, the fighting traditions of both the Russian and Red Armies and we were told about the current exploits of our soldiers. Historical films were also regularly shown in the school's club. Pride for the country, aspiration and the will to victory were brought up in us."

### **"Unbelievably taxing" combat**

Zhukova was among 559 female snipers aged 18 to 23 who graduated in her draft and she was deployed to join 611th Rifle Regiment on the Eastern Front in November 1944, a part of the 88th Rifle Division. The regiment had been in action since the beginning of the war, fought its way through central Russia and Byelorussia (Belarus) and had a heroic reputation.

611th had been encircled only a month before Zhukova's arrival where one of its sergeants had posthumously been made a 'Hero of the Soviet Union' for successfully protecting the regimental banner.



Zhukova holding her new sniper rifle while her comrade Lyuba Ruzhitskaya poses with binoculars, June 1944

# MOSIN-NAGANT RIFLE

RUSSIAN SNIPERS USED A DURABLE WEAPON THAT WAS INITIALLY DESIGNED IN THE 19TH CENTURY BUT WAS STILL THE BEST WEAPON FOR MARKSMEN ON THE EASTERN FRONT

This pictured example of a Mosin-Nagant sniper rifle was manufactured in Izhevsk in 1943. The telescopic sight is a PEM calibre rather than the usual PU



When the new detachment of snipers arrived at the regiment's position after a long journey, Zhukova and her fellow graduates came under fire, "Hot soup was served and we swiftly started eating. At that moment, a mortar attack began. From fear, we abandoned everything. This included our mess tins and rifles and we dashed down to the cellar. We later finished the now cold soup and cursed the Germans. It was embarrassing to have left our weapons behind and this never happened again. The soldiers laughed and claimed that the Germans had specially arranged this 'salute' in honour of our arrival."

Now fighting in wintry, defensive trenches as a junior sergeant, Zhukova worked closely with others in her unit, "We were very close and helped each other, whether it be a female or male comrade. It was normal for us to go fighting in pairs. While one of us observed the surrounding territory with binoculars, the other would be looking through the rifle's optic. Then we would change places."

Just before New Year 1945, Zhukova killed her first German soldier. She remembers her unease at what had happened, "I was congratulated by my superior but I was overcome by a complex set of emotions that day. I was glad to have opened my wartime tally but when you kill a human being, even an enemy, you feel uneasy. I remember feeling slightly nauseous and shivery that evening and did not want to think about the dead man. Then it all passed.

"I saw so many evil things committed by the Nazis that I felt no pity for those I killed. It is frightening to admit it but wiping out an enemy became just a job, a duty which had to be well performed. Otherwise, they would kill you."

With 611th Zhukova became embroiled in the savage fighting conditions on the Eastern Front, "I experienced being both on the offensive and defensive and fully knowing the bitterness of retreat and being encircled for many days at a time. I endured bombing raids and both artillery and mortar fire.

"I froze in the snows of No-Man's-Land tracking down a target to hit and getting soaked to the skin in the Masurian Lakes of northeast Poland for the same reason. I cared for the wounded and, in the heat of battle, gave blood for them. I made and lost

Known in the West as the 'Mosin-Nagant', Zhukova's principal weapon was the Obr. 1891/30-type infantry rifle.

By WWII, the Mosin-Nagant was an old design that had been first adopted in 1891. It was updated by the Soviets to include a telescopic sight for snipers from 1931 and gained a reputation for its simplicity and high reliability.

Other rifles, such as the Mauser Kar. 98k, would seize up in the often freezing conditions of



*A pair of snipers shoot at the enemy from a trench, 1 August 1944. Zhukova began operating in similar conditions later that year*

the Eastern Front. By contrast the Mosin-Nagant would always work even in temperatures as low as -30 degrees Celsius. Snipers also benefitted from the PU telescope sight, which had higher quality lenses than the Germans whose sight adjuster drums could jam in the extreme cold.

Zhukova largely praises the Mosin-Nagant although she reveals that it was not faultless, "As soon as we learned to handle our weapons more or less tolerably, our ordinary rifles were

replaced by snipers' models with the telescopic sights. We instantly appreciated the advantages of these new weapons, which would accompany us to the front. The Mosin sniper rifle was perfect for point shots at long-range single targets with a telescopic sight providing a range of up to 1,300 metres. However, the design of the optical sight meant that you could only insert one cartridge at a time. Therefore the responsibility of each sniper's shot was dramatically increased."



## THE SOVIET SNIPER

friends, spent time in hospital, escaped death by a miracle and was almost captured."

Such intense experiences were crammed into a short space of time, "Physical stress, challenges to morale, cold, hunger, chronic lack of sleep, and the filth of life in the trenches – all this is part of war. And for me, it was all compressed into several unbelievably taxing months."

Fighting the Soviet troops all the way were the Germans whose hatred of the Russians was geared towards genocide, "German soldiers were determined, ruthless, savage and firmly convinced of the rightness of their cause. The ideology of the Nazis was not just to completely eliminate Jews but also Russians. Thousands of villages and hundreds of cities were ruined and civilians were tortured and killed by the Germans just for nothing."

Zhukova was acutely aware that as a female sniper she was particularly vulnerable to German brutality, "To give you an example of how it was: Tatyana Baramzina graduated from our sniper school and was decorated as a Hero of the Soviet Union, which was the highest commendation for heroic action. She fought the Nazis for at least an hour while defending a bunker with wounded soldiers.

"The Germans caught her, tortured her, gouged out her eyes and she was then shot with an anti-tank gun. The wounded soldiers in the bunker were then all killed."

### **"Bullets were flying at me"**

From January 1945, the 88th Rifle Division went on the offensive into East Prussia with 611th Rifle Regiment advancing in the first echelon. Before entering Prussian territory, the Soviet troops were given strict instructions, "We were lined up and an order was read that threatened the most severe punishments, including the firing squad, for looting or taking the law into our own hands. We did not set up concentration camps, burn people in ovens, take children from their mothers or enslave people as the Germans did with us."

Nevertheless these orders were often ignored, "Sometimes our soldiers did not follow the instructions. Those who had lost their homes and had their families killed by the Germans were furious with them. There was very heavy fighting in East Prussia, which was a loyal bulwark to the Nazi regime and they fought to the end. When the war was over, I recall that they were still shooting at us from around corners, attics or woods."

After taking Lidzbark Warminski, Poland, 611th advanced towards Górowo Iławeckie where heavy fighting occurred on the approaches. The Red Army took the town but Zhukova's unit became encircled for nine days inside Landsberg,

"It seemed to me as if the bullets were flying straight at me. Some days we had to fight off six to eight German attacks. Everyone who was capable held weapons in the trenches, including wounded or sick soldiers. The artillerymen pulled their guns up to the front line and beat the Germans at direct fire but when they fired their last shells they also came into the trenches."

Fearing capture Zhukova made desperate preparations, "I put two spare cartridges in my pocket for myself just in case the Germans got their hands on me.

"We were more afraid of captivity than death because we had seen more than once what the fascists were doing to the prisoners."

The German blockade was eventually broken by Soviet reinforcements, "We cried, laughed and rocked the soldiers who came to our aid and saved hundreds of lives. Winning was never easy though because many soldiers died to break through to us."

Although Zhukova ultimately crossed the whole of Prussia with her division, she and her fellow female snipers were sent back to tend to wounded soldiers in various medical centres. After then joining a reserve regiment, she was herself hospitalised after a small wound became seriously infected. Zhukova almost lost her right leg but after a painful recovery she was assigned to the Alexander Nevsky Howitzer Regiment.



Zhukova (front row, left) and other new recruits pictured on the day they arrived at the Central Women's Sniper School, 10 April 1944

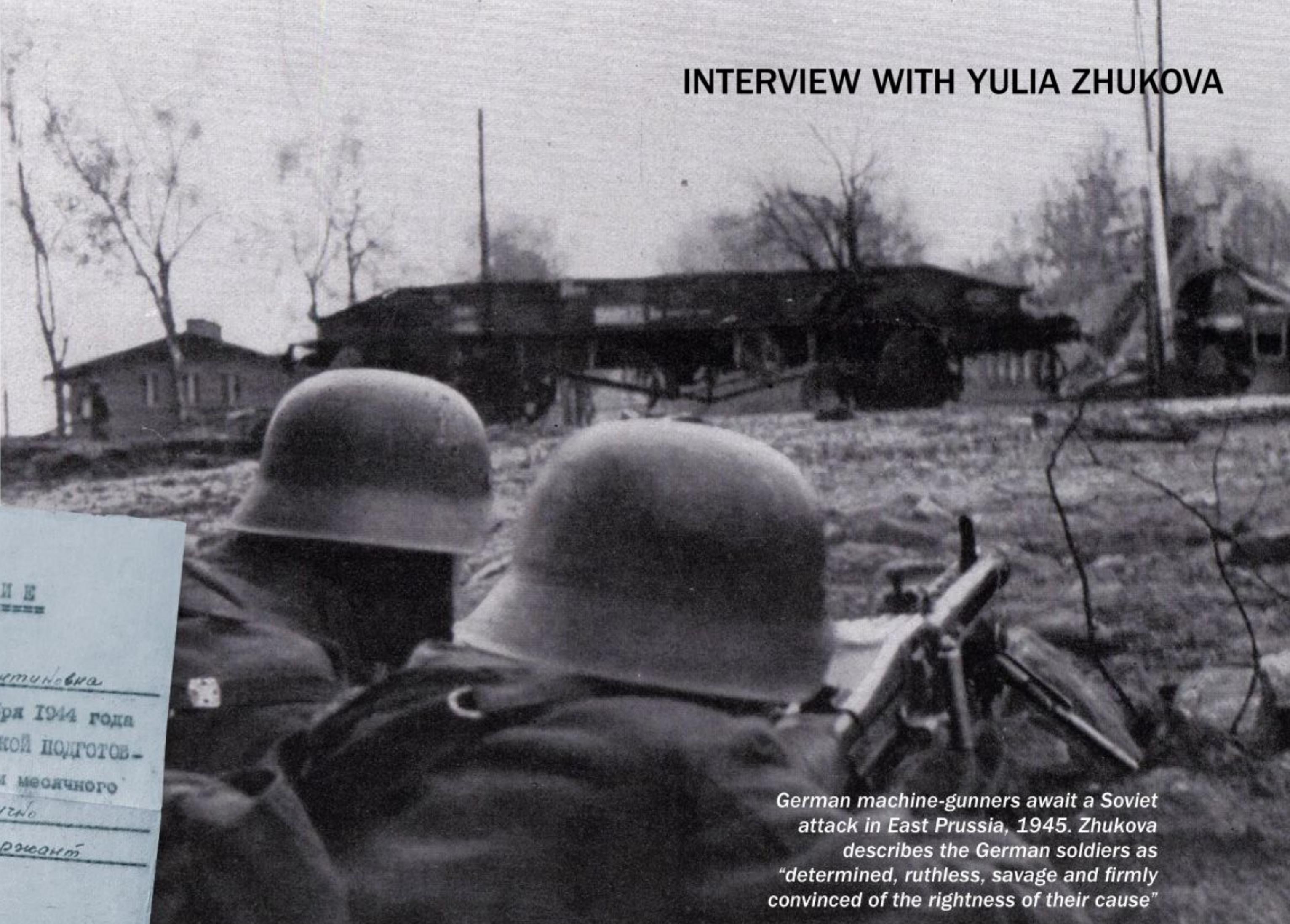
**"I PUT TWO SPARE CARTRIDGES IN MY POCKET FOR MYSELF JUST IN CASE THE GERMANS GOT THEIR HANDS ON ME. WE WERE MORE AFRAID OF CAPTIVITY THAN DEATH BECAUSE WE HAD SEEN MORE THAN ONCE WHAT THE FASCISTS WERE DOING TO THE PRISONERS"**



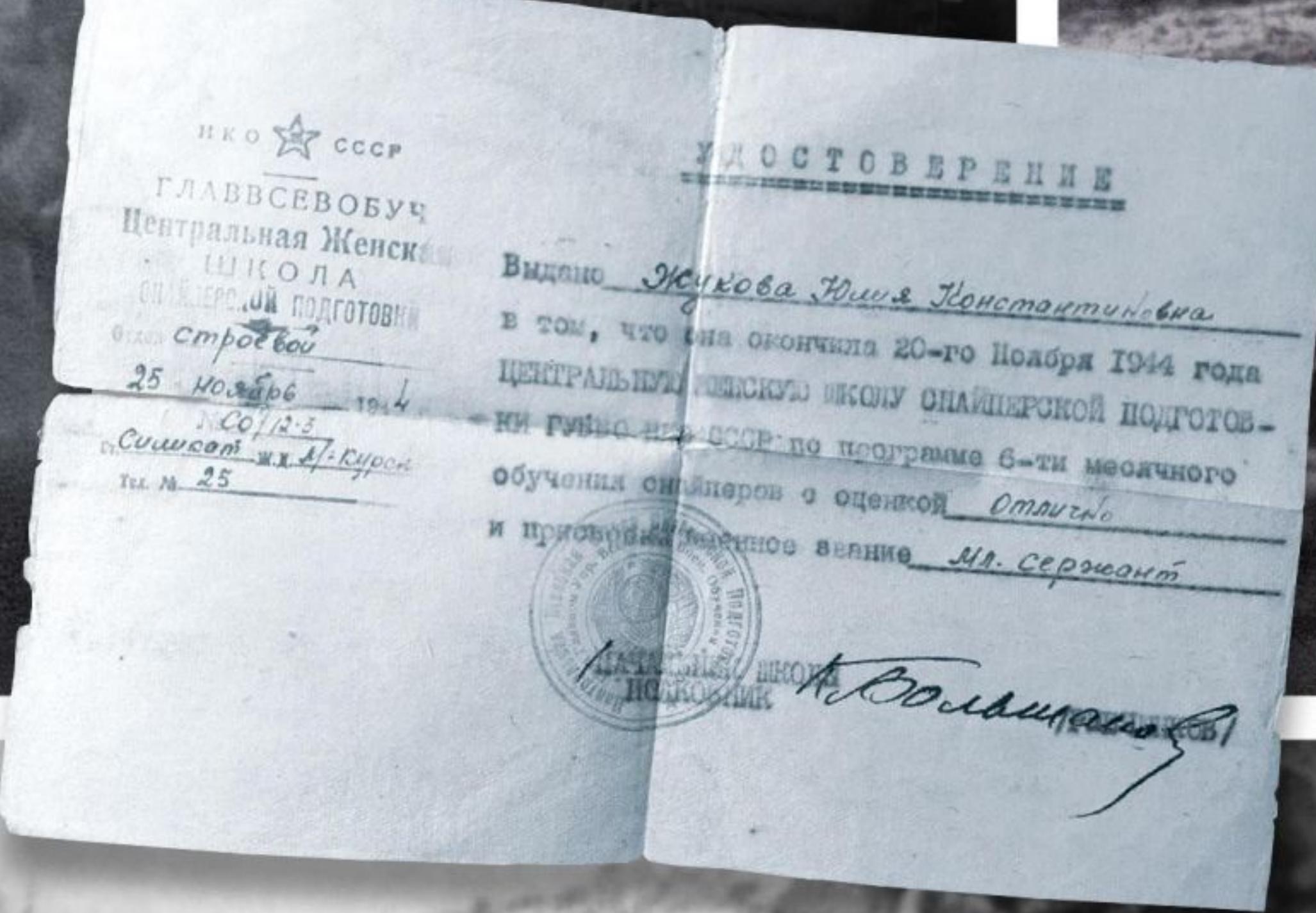
*Lyudmila Pavlichenko is the most successful female sniper in history. The Ukrainian former history postgraduate ended the war as a major, received the Soviet Union's highest military decoration and toured Allied countries*



Zhukova pictured with her protective "knights in shining armour" from the Alexander Nevsky Howitzer Regiment in Geidau, East Prussia, 20 June 1945



German machine-gunners await a Soviet attack in East Prussia, 1945. Zhukova describes the German soldiers as "determined, ruthless, savage and firmly convinced of the rightness of their cause"

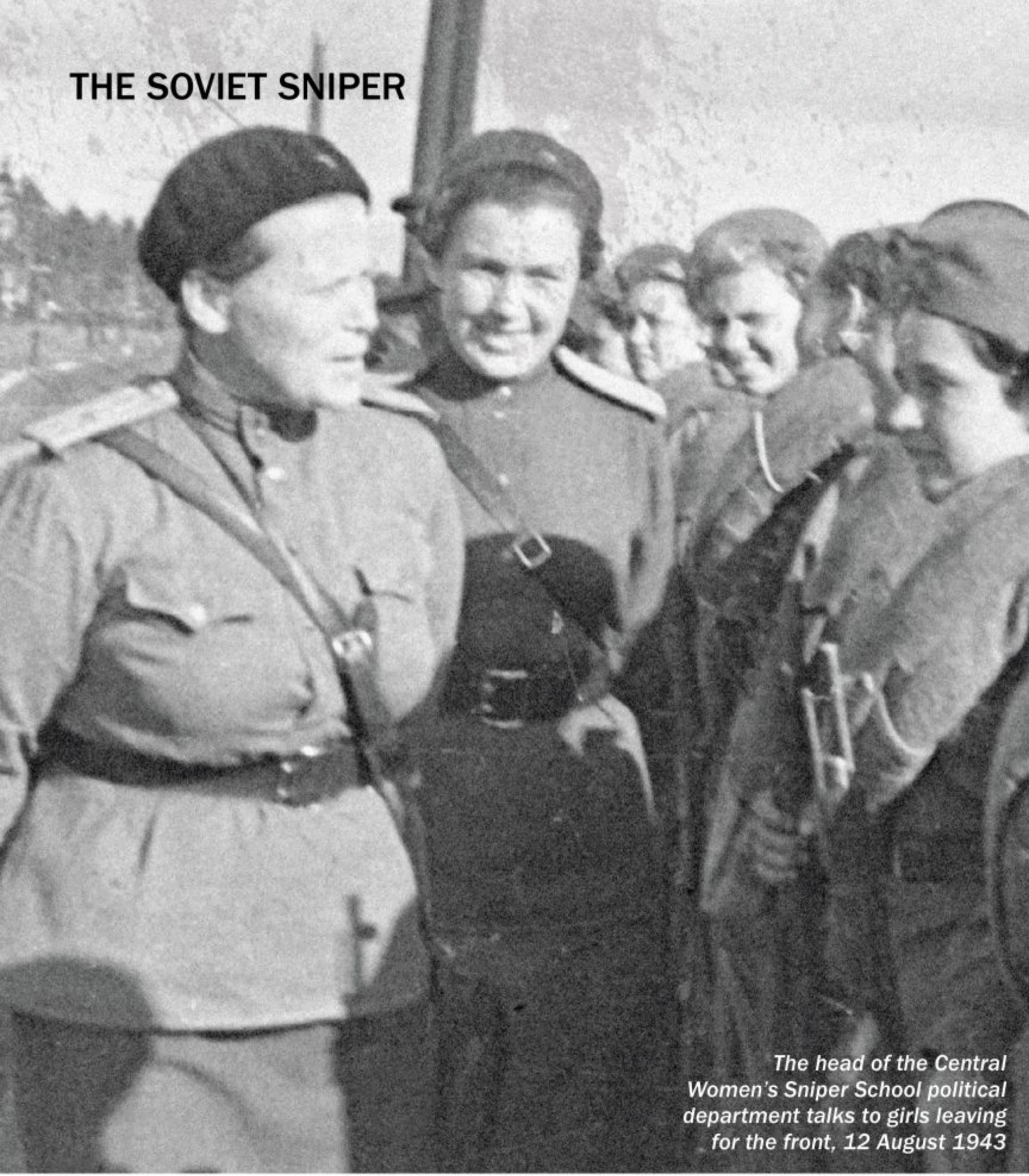


Above: Zhukova's graduation certificate from the Central Women's Sniper School



Red Army troops pictured while engaged in street fighting in Königsberg, East Prussia, April 1945

## THE SOVIET SNIPER



The head of the Central Women's Sniper School political department talks to girls leaving for the front, 12 August 1943

Now separated from her fellow snipers, Zhukova worked in relative safety as a telephonist for the last month of the war at divisional headquarters. She was also the only woman in her regiment and was largely protected by her attentive male counterparts, "I was surrounded and supported by the male soldiers. As the only woman in the regiment, I shared their trenches, sleeping areas, tents or hospital rooms. After the war I received three letters from my soldier-friends speaking of their love and with marriage proposals."

Nevertheless, despite many of her male comrades' affections and protection, Zhukova was not entirely free from the risk of unwanted sexual advances, "Of course, there were other cases. I was molested by a few officers but was fortunately able to escape being raped. There was often a feeling that the war had ruined all moral barriers, including those between men and women. This was because we were all really on the eve of being killed, sooner or later."

The horrors of the war, both on and off the battlefield, meant that the German surrender on 9 May 1945 was greeted with great celebration, "We all picked up our weapons and ran into the street. There were hugs, tears, laughter and random shooting in the air. Gunners gave several, powerful volleys towards the Baltic Sea and accordion music began improvised dances. This was the long awaited 'Victory' with a capital 'V' because this was a great victory of the whole people, who had paid very dearly for it."

### The cost of war

Zhukova returned home to Uralsk and was discharged from the Red Army in August 1945. She is highly decorated for her wartime service and her awards include two medals 'For Bravery', the Order of the Great War for the Fatherland (2nd Class) and the Marshal

Zhukov Medal. For her services on the Home Front before military service Zhukova was also awarded the Order of the Badge of Honour and a medal 'For Valour on the Labour Front'.

As a sniper Zhukova's total 'score' comprised of eight dead soldiers although she explains that the real tally was almost certainly higher, "How is one supposed to count them? When we were encircled at Landsberg, we fired and fired for days until our eyes grew dark. I kept firing along with the soldiers beside me and the machine guns. How can you calculate how many fell from your bullets?

"My eight victims represent what was confirmed by observers and, basically, they were targets destroyed on orders."

After the war Zhukova graduated from the Moscow Pedagogical Institute and had a successful career as a secondary school director and mid-level leader in the Communist Party for educational development in Moscow. She attributes her leadership skills to her wartime service although she was also traumatised by her experiences, "For the first 30 years or so after the war I had regular nightmares about running, shooting, being shot at and mines exploding around me. Most of all, I was afraid of falling into enemy hands in my dreams. But, in most cases, a sniper has sole responsibility for his or her decisions. They have the right for just one shot as the second one could be for them. It developed my leadership skills and helped me overcome many post-war difficulties. I did not talk about my past for a long time but people possibly felt a strength inside me and accepted my leadership."

Today the Great Patriotic War is still widely commemorated. On 9 May each year people from across Russia take part in 'Immortal Regiment' processions, "The war is still in the memory of our people. There were so many losses – 27 million or so died – and

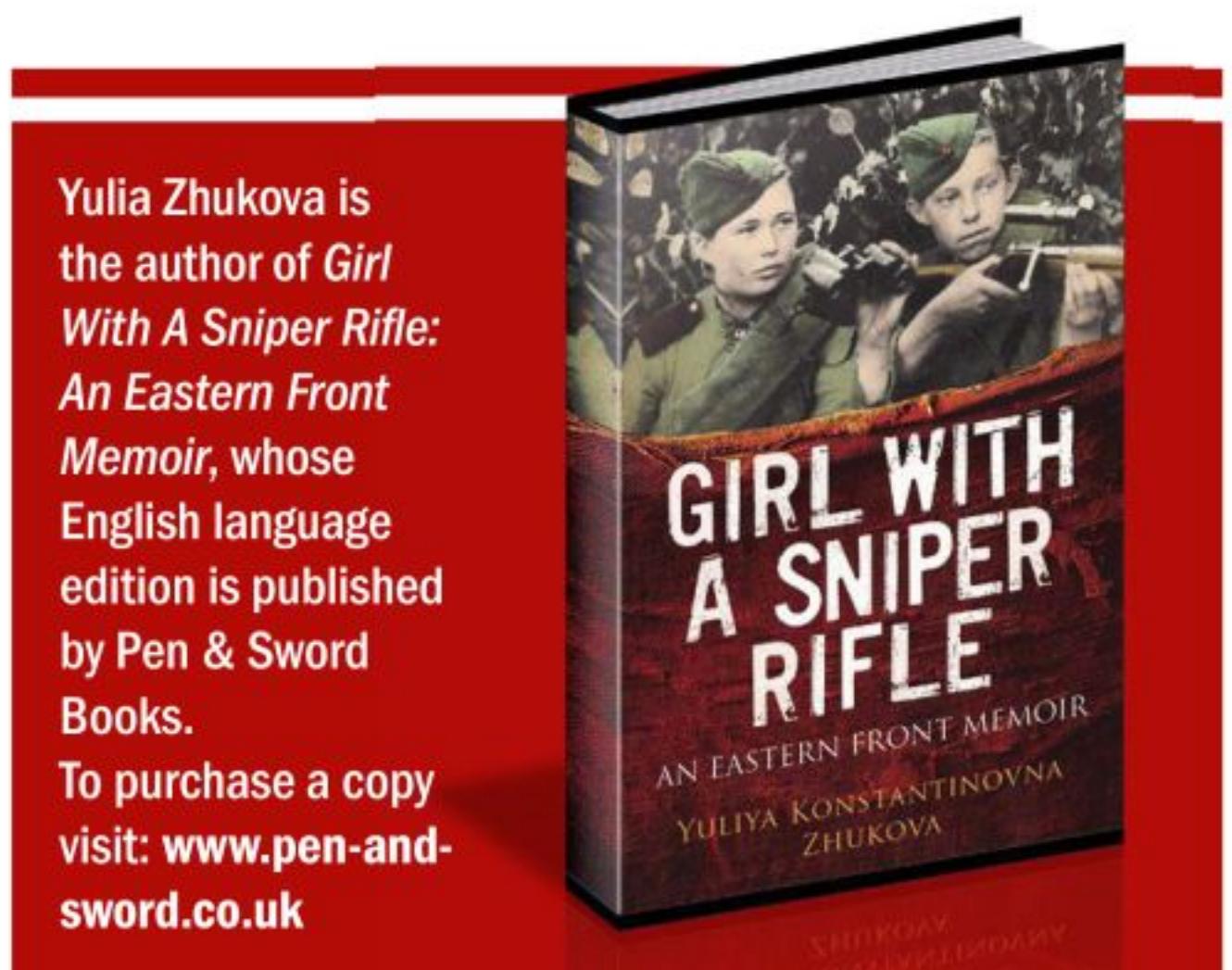


Zhukova (central row, second right) with the rest of her squad in training, August 1944. She is seated next to Sergeant Masha Duvanova (centre)

in the USSR there is almost no family who did not lose someone. Thousands come out on the street carrying photos of veterans who died or survived the war. The people are proud of their ancestry and, today, I am proud of our people."

Having experienced some of the worst atrocities in human history as a teenager Zhukova remains concerned for today's younger generation, particularly with regards to international relations between the West and Russia, "The Great Patriotic War was a deadly battle for the existence of my multinational country. Nowadays, young people can travel freely around the world and work, learn or go on vacations in the West. There are many economic links and we have started knowing each other better than before. It is foolish to even think that Russia will attack someone in the West. However increased separation and further armament may easily destroy that mutual understanding. More and more young people join the 'Immortal Regiment' to demonstrate their attachment to their homeland and this has to be taken into consideration by those who oppose our rapprochement."

Yulia Zhukova is the author of *Girl With A Sniper Rifle: An Eastern Front Memoir*, whose English language edition is published by Pen & Sword Books.  
To purchase a copy visit: [www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk)





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British aviation industry was at the peak of its manufacturing prowess.



## Heroes of the Victoria Cross

# GEOFFREY CHARLES TASKER KEYES

A daring 1941 Commando raid in the North African desert to kill or capture Rommel failed and cost a gallant young officer his life

WORDS MICHAEL E. HASKEW

The dramatic reversal of fortune that followed German General Erwin Rommel and the introduction of the vaunted Afrika Korps to the fighting in the North African desert brought the commander grudging respect from his British adversaries. By the autumn of 1941, the reputation of the 'Desert Fox' had grown substantially – and with it the desire to eliminate him.

The fighting in the Western Desert during World War II was marked by the ebb and flow of offensives, tremendous distance, and one of the world's harshest climates. Decisive action was destined to take place there and senior British commanders wanted Rommel out of the way. Intelligence reports suggested that the general's headquarters were located at Beda Littoria, a remote village in northern Libya near the ancient city of Cyrene. To confirm the enemy leader's presence, Captain John Haselden, an officer of the famous Long-Range Desert Group (LRDG), parachuted into the area.

Haselden, who spoke fluent Arabic, made his way toward Beda Littoria 250 miles behind enemy lines. Shortly after arriving, he spotted nearly two dozen Afrika Korps vehicles clustered around a building known locally as the Prefettura. Moments later

Rommel emerged, apparently confirming the reports. Haselden made his way to British Middle Eastern Command Headquarters in Cairo, Egypt. His subsequent briefing set in motion perhaps the most heroic but tragic special operations raid of the war.

Several months prior to Haselden's mission, Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. 'Lucky' Laycock

had brought a Commando contingent, nicknamed Layforce, to the Middle East. His No. 11 (Scottish) Commando was chosen to execute the hazardous foray, and 24-year-old temporary Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey Charles Tasker Keyes contributed to the plan dubbed Operation Flipper. Keyes was no ordinary up-and-comer. His father was Admiral of the Fleet Sir Roger Keyes, a hero of World War I handpicked by Prime Minister Winston Churchill as chief of Commando operations.

Geoffrey Keyes attended Eton College and the Royal Military College at Sandhurst. He had hoped to follow his father's career path but failed the Royal Navy's eyesight test. Undeterred 2nd Lieutenant Keyes joined his uncle's cavalry regiment, the fabled Royal Scots Greys. Keyes served in Palestine in the late 1930s, and by February 1940, he had returned to Britain on leave and volunteered for special operations.

Lieutenant Keyes, an accomplished skier, was chosen to participate in an expedition to Norway, but within weeks Allied forces were withdrawn and the operation cancelled. A short stint with his old regiment serving as a liaison officer with the French Chasseurs Alpins led to the award of the Croix de Guerre. Soon, he was assigned to No. 11 Commando. After rigorous

**"BY HIS FEARLESS DISREGARD  
OF THE GREAT DANGERS  
WHICH HE RAN AND OF WHICH  
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LIEUTENANT-COLONEL KEYES  
SET AN EXAMPLE OF SUPREME  
SELF SACRIFICE AND DEVOTION  
TO DUTY"**

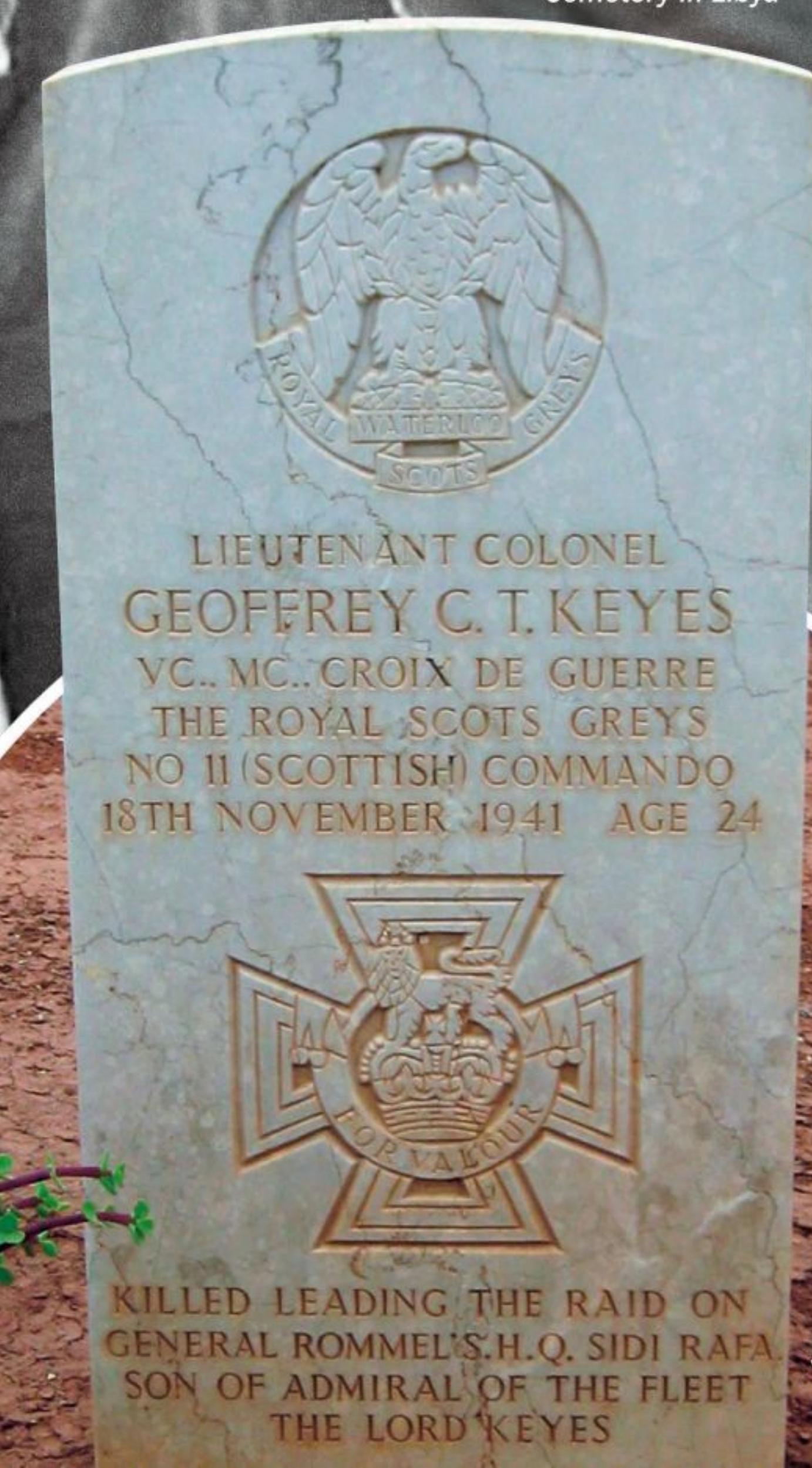
**Victoria Cross Citation**

Lieutenant Colonel  
Geoffrey Keyes received  
a posthumous Victoria  
Cross for heroism during  
an abortive raid on Erwin  
Rommel's headquarters

“I AM SO PLEASED YOU  
APPLIED FOR THE SERVICE  
- BECAUSE I WAS GOING TO  
APPLY FOR YOU. I AM DIRECTOR  
OF COMBINED OPERATIONS;  
ALL COMMANDOS AND  
INDEPENDENT COMPANIES  
COME UNDER MY INFLUENCE ...  
YOUR LOVING DADDY”

Admiral Keyes to his son,  
25 July 1940

Lieutenant Colonel  
Geoffrey Keyes, hero  
of the raid on Rommel,  
rests in the Benghazi War  
Cemetery in Libya



training in the Scottish Highlands the unit shipped to the Middle East in January 1941. In June No. 11 Commando spearheaded the crossing of the Litani River in Lebanon during the Allied invasion of Syria. Keyes received the Military Cross for heroism against Vichy French forces and after the unit's commander, Colonel Richard Pedder, was killed he took command. When No. 11 Commando withdrew to Cyprus, Keyes was allowed to remain in charge of 110 volunteers attached to Middle East Command.

In conjunction with a major British desert offensive, Operation Crusader, special forces including the LRDG and Special Air Service (SAS), were ordered to conduct operations behind Axis lines. As Crusader was slated for 18 November, the raid on Rommel gained greater urgency, encompassing four initial objectives. In addition to the German headquarters at Beda Littoria and the villa reported to be Rommel's residence west of the town, the Commandos would attack Italian headquarters in Cyrene and disable communications equipment, strike the Italian intelligence-gathering station at Appollonia, Libya, and sever communication lines around the town of El Faidia.

Senior officers agreed that the effort was fraught with risk and prospects for getting out alive were slim, but the dividend a successful raid might deliver

*Admiral of the Fleet Roger Keyes praised his son for volunteering for duty with the special forces*



“I GAVE IT MY CONSIDERED OPINION THAT THE CHANCES OF BEING EVACUATED AFTER THE OPERATION WERE VERY SLENDER, AND THAT THE ATTACK ON GENERAL ROMMEL'S HOUSE IN PARTICULAR APPEARED TO BE DESPERATE IN THE EXTREME”

**Colonel Robert Laycock**

was deemed worthwhile. Keyes insisted on personally leading the operation, and Laycock went along as an observer.

On the night of 14 November the submarines HMS Talisman and HMS Torbay, with 60 Commandos aboard, reached a point off Djebel Akhdar, 20 miles west of Appollonia. From the beach Captain Haselden watched for a recognition signal.

But shortly after contact was established the plan began to unravel.

Gale force winds whipped the sea. The entire landing was to be accomplished in 90 minutes, but

seven hours were required to land Keyes and 27 other men from Torbay. A rainsquall disrupted landings from Talisman, and 11 men were swept overboard. Only Colonel Laycock and seven others reached the beach. As the sun rose about half the original force was assembled. Laycock decided to limit the mission's objectives to only three of the original four, the communications centre at Cyrene, the headquarters at Beda Littoria, and the communication lines near El Faidia.

Laycock remained at the landing site with three men, hoping that those still aboard Talisman could eventually join him. On the evening of 15 November Haselden and five Commandos set out for El Faidia, Lieutenant Roy Cooke took six toward Cyrene and Keyes led 25 on the 18-mile trek toward Beda Littoria. The weather steadily deteriorated.

As Keyes' men slogged through mud and torrential rain their Arab guide abandoned them. By the evening of the 16 November, the Commandos had reached a cave about five miles from Beda Littoria. Rain-soaked, they cleaned weapons and dried clothes.

Maintaining cover during daylight hours, Keyes reached a ridgeline near Beda Littoria on the night of the 17 November. Fifty yards ahead of his command, Keyes and Sergeant Jack Terry led the way toward the building. Then the unthinkable happened. One of the men inadvertently tripped on a tin can, alerting the Italian occupants of a small house. Dogs barked. When the Italians challenged the Commandos, Captain Robin Campbell replied in fluent German that they were a returning patrol. Satisfied, the Italians shuffled back to their rest. Further



*HMS Torbay was one of the submarines that delivered Commandos to North Africa during the raid on Rommel*

forward Keyes killed a German sentry with his knife and positioned a covering group near the approaches to the six-story headquarters.

Advancing with Campbell and Terry, Keyes could not find a quick entry point. Campbell pounded on the door and shouted in German to be allowed inside. When an enemy soldier responded, Keyes shoved a revolver into his stomach. The German struck back, pushing Keyes into a wall and sounding the alarm. Keyes reached for his knife but Campbell shot the German dead, firing over his commander's shoulder.

Forcing the door open Keyes led six Commandos inside. Terry fired a burst from his Thompson submachine gun forcing one German to retreat upstairs. Chaos reigned. After clearing the first room, which was empty, the raiders saw a shaft of light emerge from another. Kicking that door open, Keyes got the drop on ten Germans just donning their helmets and fired his revolver. Campbell motioned that he would toss a grenade inside.

Keyes closed the door momentarily. Campbell pulled the grenade pin. Keyes then reopened the door as Campbell tossed the explosive into the room and squeezed a burst from his Tommy gun. Just as the grenade exploded a German soldier fired a shot striking Keyes in the chest near his heart. By the time his comrades had carried him outside the gallant young officer was dead.

A momentary lull settled over the scene and Campbell dashed back into the building in total darkness. He then exited and ran to the other side where the covering party was positioned. Thinking he was a German soldier one of the

Commandos fired at him shattering his leg. Immobilised, Campbell ordered the others to leave him and withdraw.

When Sergeant Terry brought explosives forward to destroy the Prefettura, he found that the rain-soaked fuses were useless. The only damage the Commandos could inflict were a few blown-up vehicles and a grenade dropped down a pipe to destroy the main generator.

Although the remaining raiders managed to clear out of the enemy base, their ordeal was far from over. Some had been captured. Campbell was treated well although his leg required amputation. The rest reached Colonel Laycock on the beach, but extraction by submarine proved impossible due to the weather. After fighting off attacks from German troops and hostile Arabs, Laycock ordered his men to scatter. Bombardier John Brittlebank, a member of the Special Boat Service (SBS) group that brought the raiders ashore, spent 40 days in the desert before Allied troops found him. Lance Corporal L.J. Codd reached Tobruk, where he was captured by Italian soldiers. Laycock and Terry journeyed more than a month across the desert to reach British lines.

Operation Flotilla ended in costly failure. Keyes was dead, another Commando had drowned and 28 were

*General and later Field Marshal Erwin Rommel was the primary target of the Commando raid that ended in tragedy*

taken prisoner. Cooke's party was apparently cornered and captured. Haselden's men did complete their mission and were picked up by the LRDG. Four Germans were killed and three wounded. Operation Crusader proceeded but dealt Rommel only a temporary setback.

In a bitterly ironic twist, the Prefettura had served as the Desert Fox's headquarters only briefly. Haselden had glimpsed him during a short visit, nothing more. Rommel was actually in Rome at the time of the raid.

Nevertheless Keyes' heroism and sacrifice were inspiring. Prime Minister Churchill offered his grieving father, "I would far rather have Geoffrey alive than Rommel dead."

The Germans buried Keyes with full military honours, and his remains were later moved to the Benghazi War Cemetery, where he rests with more than 1,000 others who perished serving their country during World War II. His posthumous Victoria Cross is now on display in the Imperial War Museum.

Images: Alamy, Getty



## REPORTING ON THE TROUBLES

A British soldier looks on while a building burns in Derry-Londonderry, 1969



# REPORTING ON THE TROUBLES

*Right: Peter Taylor's most recent documentary for the BBC about Northern Ireland was My Journey Through The Troubles*



ACCLAIMED JOURNALIST PETER TAYLOR OBE DISCUSSES COVERING NORTHERN IRELAND'S SECTARIAN CONFLICT SINCE BLOODY SUNDAY AND THE ISLAND'S DIFFICULT PAST

WORDSTOM GARNER

**2**019 is a significant year for commemorating events in the history of The Troubles. This includes anniversaries for the first deployment of British troops, the assassination of Lord Louis Mountbatten and the Warrenpoint ambush where 18 British paratroopers were killed.

More broadly the conflict tore Northern Ireland apart and resulted in over 3,500 fatalities. Despite the signing of the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 that largely brought an end to hostilities, the 'peace process' remains incredibly delicate.

Peter Taylor has reported on The Troubles since its most infamous event on Bloody Sunday in 1972. First broadcasting for ITV and then the BBC, Taylor is renowned for his coverage of the conflict. This includes many interviews with people from all sides including paramilitaries, soldiers, politicians, police and civilians. He has also written extensively on the subject and is the recipient of many awards, including from BAFTA and the Royal Television Society.

A studiously objective commentator, Taylor has nevertheless projected a uniquely British light on what is often wrongly perceived as a specifically Irish conflict. Here he reveals how he became immersed in The Troubles, Britain's role and how Ireland is haunted by history.

**Although it was a bloody conflict within the UK, why was there a misunderstanding about The Troubles on mainland Britain?**

People in the rest of the UK, excluding Northern Ireland, really didn't understand what was going on and didn't want to know about it. It was all too confusing, nasty and complex and therefore it was easier to turn a blind eye. Although Northern Ireland was, and is, part of the UK, I don't think it was regarded as such by every English person.

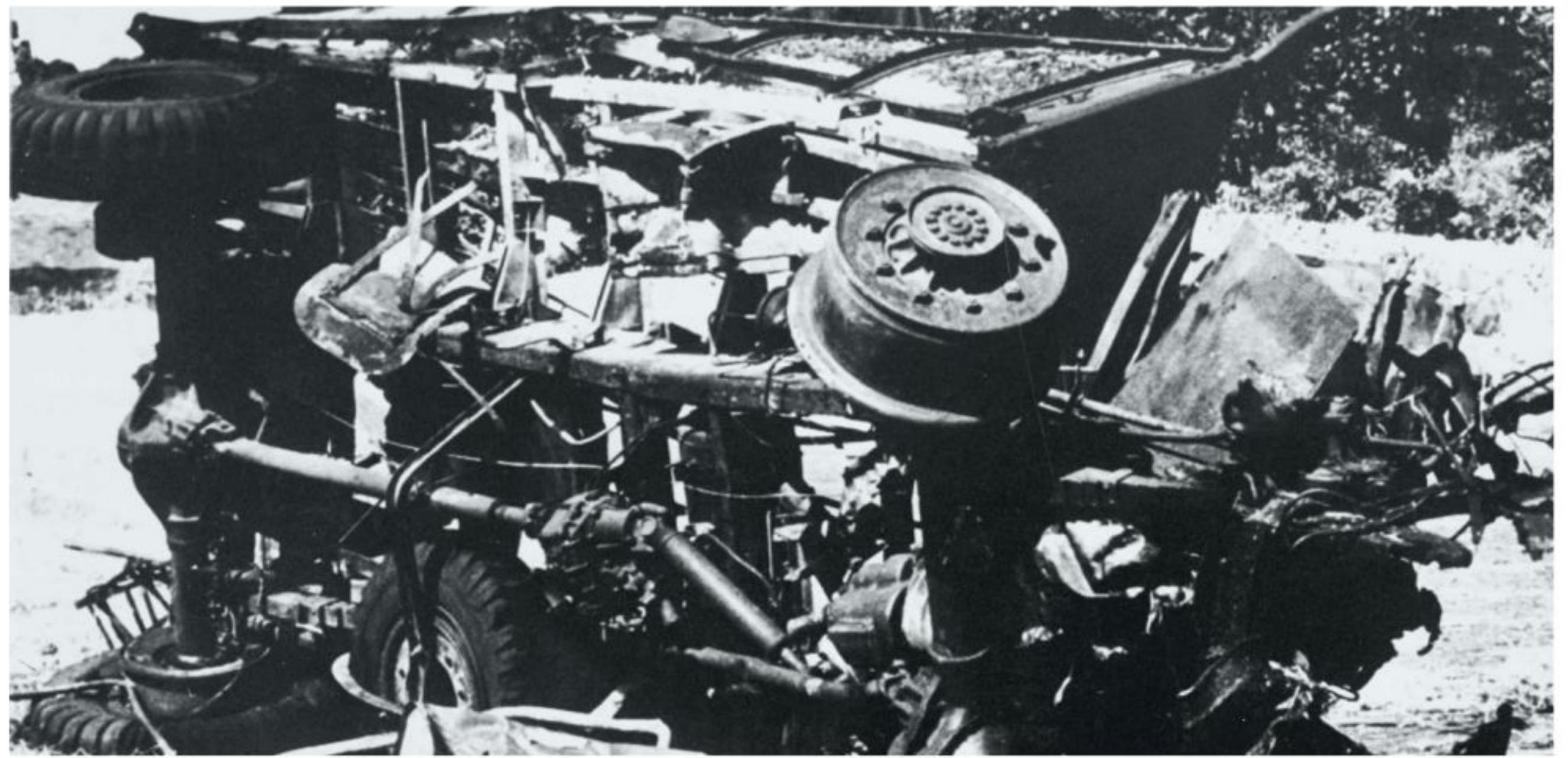
Also the media didn't really come to terms with what the issue was particularly in the early days. It seemed 'far away' although it wasn't at all. However, because it was geographically detached from the rest of the UK, I think it gave a distance that helped people push it to one side. That was the case for years.

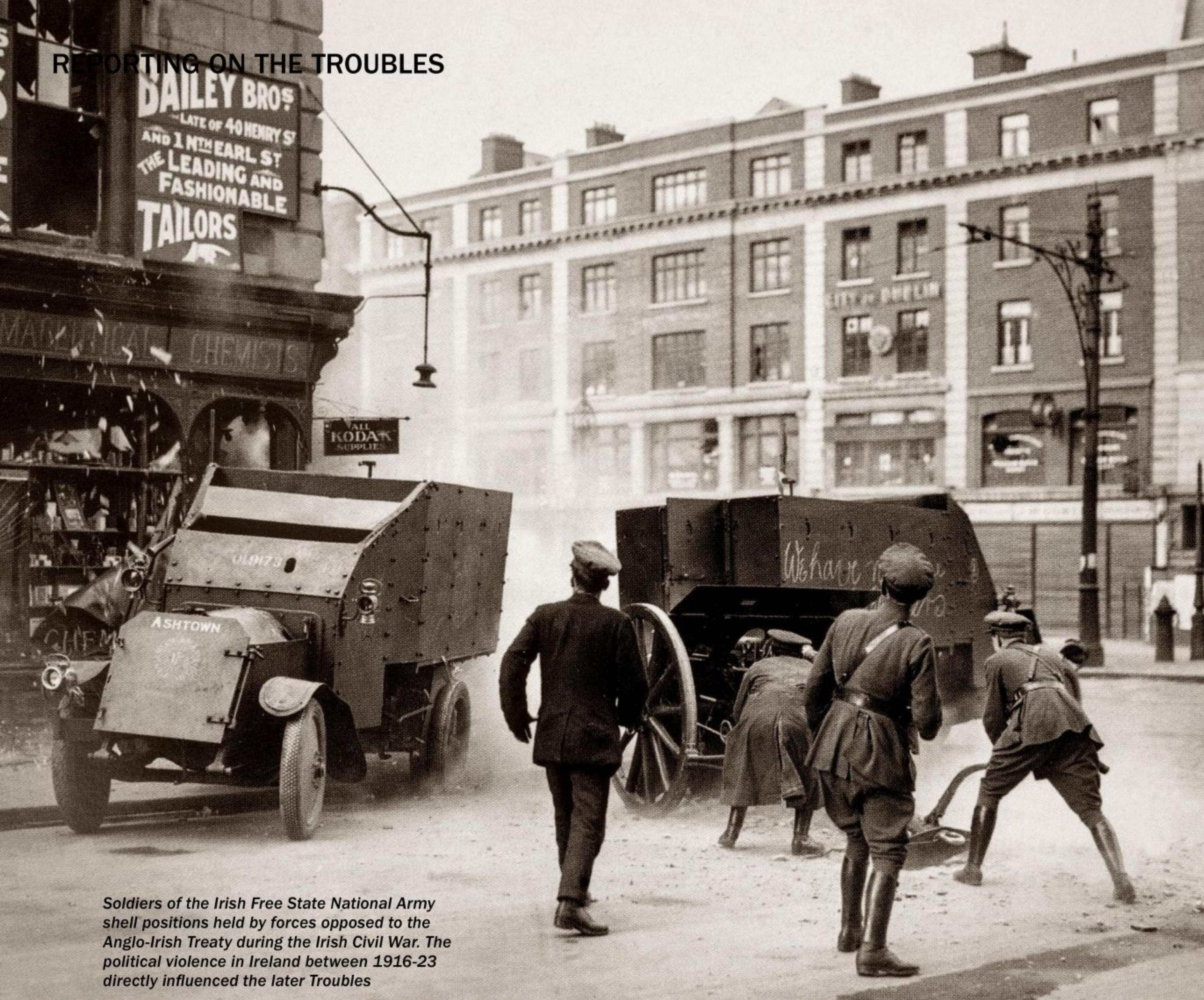
**2019 is the 50th anniversary of the deployment of British troops in 1969. It is also 40 years since the assassination of Lord Louis Mountbatten and the Warrenpoint ambush on the same day in 1979. How important were these events for the course of The Troubles?**

They were hugely important. I've always believed that the critical anniversary was the deployment of British troops in August 1969.

**Below: The remains of a British Army truck that was destroyed by an IRA bomb during the Warrenpoint ambush**

"THE BRITISH LABOUR GOVERNMENT BELIEVED THE IRA WAS ON THE RUN AND ON THE BRINK OF BEING DEFEATED. THE IRA HIT BACK IN THE MOST DRAMATIC WAY POSSIBLE BY THOSE TWO EVENTS ON A SINGLE DAY"





*Soldiers of the Irish Free State National Army shell positions held by forces opposed to the Anglo-Irish Treaty during the Irish Civil War. The political violence in Ireland between 1916-23 directly influenced the later Troubles*

The army was originally deployed to basically stop an incipient civil war and to prevent the two sides from killing each other – particularly Loyalists killing Catholics.

They thought they were going to be there until Christmas but they didn't know that was going to be 40 years down the road!

The reason why it was the real beginning of The Troubles was that once you had soldiers on the streets they were – to Republicans – an illustration of the British occupation of what they regarded as an intrinsic part of the island of Ireland. By the end of 1969 the Provisional IRA had been formed.

They grew out of the inability of the traditional, 'Old' IRA to protect the Catholic,

Nationalist enclaves in Belfast from Loyalist attacks. The Provincials then dominated one part of the conflict for the best part of 40 years.

In 1979 the assassination of Mountbatten and Warrenpoint was the high point of the IRA's military campaign.

It was hitting back at the Brits and it was also the time of the run up to the Hunger Strike and prison protests. The British Labour government believed the IRA was on the run and on the brink of being defeated. The IRA hit back in the most dramatic way possible by those two events on a single day.

I've discussed it with senior British officers and generals at the time and they admit that the IRA was a formidable enemy. The assassination of Mountbatten was dramatic because of the target and the security around him was simply not what it should have been in hindsight. However the planning that went into Warrenpoint was of a very sophisticated, military nature. The combined impact gave the IRA its biggest military boost in that first decade of The Troubles.

#### **What did you know of Northern Ireland before you first reported from there in 1972?**

To my shame, I knew very little. I had a working knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement and the

evolution of The Troubles. However, in terms of 'why' there was conflict, I simply didn't know.

#### **What was your experience of the immediate aftermath of Bloody Sunday?**

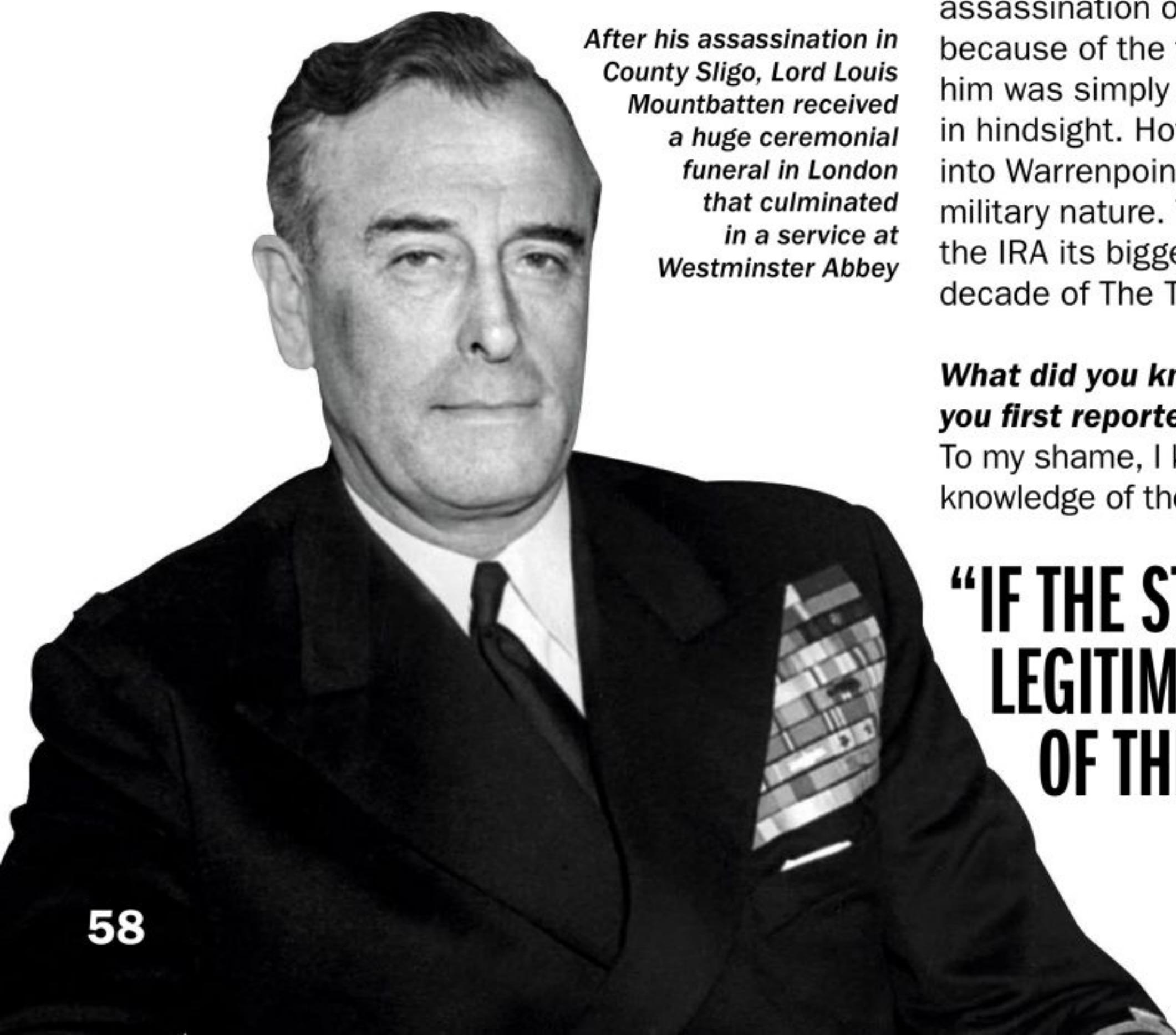
I actually arrived in Derry-Londonderry on the night of Bloody Sunday after the shooting was over. I was very nervous and I remember going to bed in a B&B that night feeling quite worried in case a sniper tried to shoot me through the window. It sounds silly now but that was a measure of the tension.

I went down into the Bogside the following morning and I'll never forget it. There was nobody around and there were pools of blood and flowers where the dead had fallen. There was an eerie silence and I went around knocking on doors. I was very apprehensive but to my surprise I didn't have doors slammed in my face or face abuse for being a "murdering Brit". I was instead invited in and people said to me, "We're glad that you came because you're English and we want to tell you what happened. Please let the world know what happened yesterday." It was quite remarkable.

#### **What was the impact of Bloody Sunday on you and the wider political situation?**

In the eyes of a section of Catholics and

**"IF THE STATE CAN USE VIOLENCE AGAINST US, THEN IT IS LEGITIMATE FOR US TO USE VIOLENCE AGAINST THE FORCES OF THE STATE"**



*After his assassination in County Sligo, Lord Louis Mountbatten received a huge ceremonial funeral in London that culminated in a service at Westminster Abbey*



An IRA bomb explodes. Republican paramilitaries were responsible for approximately 60 per cent of the fatalities incurred during The Troubles



British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Irish Taoiseach Bertie Ahern sign the Good Friday Agreement



Soldiers of 1st Battalion, Queen's Regiment guard a vehicle checkpoint near the UK-Irish border in County Fermanagh, 1984



A British paratrooper takes a captured civilian from the crowd on Bloody Sunday

Nationalists (although not all by any means) who witnessed it, Bloody Sunday legitimised the use of violence. They thought, "If the state can use violence against us, then it is legitimate for us to use violence against the forces of the state."

It was also a seminal moment for me and the turning point in my career. I came away thinking, "How has this happened and what's the background?" I felt guilty at my ignorance and that 'my' soldiers (i.e. me being a Brit) appeared to have been responsible for killing 13 unarmed civilians in cold blood, none of whom was carrying a firearm.

I subsequently spent the summer reading a pile of books on Irish history. It's only when you know the history that it makes sense. That was the beginning of my involvement in Northern Ireland for almost the next half-century

#### **What methods did you use to get participants on all sides to be interviewed?**

It took many years and it's about gaining trust, which is the bedrock of what I do. I have always tried to humanise conflict and talk to people about it, whatever side they're on.

People would say, "What's your agenda?" and I would reply, "I don't have one. I'm simply trying to find out what happened and be as accurate and fair as I can be in reporting it." It helps explain to an audience why they acted in the way that they did and what drove them.

Building the trust is based on their knowing, whether they are Loyalists or Republicans, that you would be fair to them. They don't expect you to say, "These are the good and bad guys,"

but they want their message put across. They use the media to do it and you've got to be very careful. This is because at no stage must you be seen to be in their employ, both emotionally and politically.

#### **What is your take of the term 'Troubles'?**

It's a vanilla expression for the shedding of blood and to simply call it 'The Troubles' is a huge euphemism. I think it was a useful term for people in the rest of the UK so that they could say, "There are 'troubles' over there but there are troubles everywhere". The term did not do 'justice' to the sheer, barbarous nature of the violence and awful atrocities that were committed by all sides. No side of the three parties to the conflict [Republican, Loyalist and British] had clean hands.

#### **How did British soldiers cope on operations?**

In 1972 I went on patrol with soldiers who were in their late teens and early 20s. This was the bloodiest year of the conflict and they were led by tough NCOs. The soldiers were nervous and the hatred of many for the Catholic, Nationalist community was visceral.

They told me that if they went into a Loyalist area they were given cups of tea whereas if they went into Catholic area they were shot at and bombed. They would say to me, "What do you expect? Do you expect us to be neutral?" I can understand why because a lot of their mates had been killed but by the same token their mates killed a lot of IRA people. As a result they alienated the Catholic, Nationalist community even more.

#### **What is your view on prosecutions of former British soldiers for crimes in Northern Ireland?**

It's a really difficult circle to square because the soldier veterans want justice. Why should they be prosecuted for events that took place nearly half a century ago when they were in the Queen's uniform? However, their victims also want justice for the loss of their loved ones. I've thought a lot about this and although it's easy to sit on the fence I've forced myself to come off it. In the end I think the law has to take its course but it's not a witch hunt against a minority of British soldiers.

If you look at the statistics from the Northern Ireland Prosecuting Service, there are many former IRA and Loyalist individuals who are also being pursued through the courts. They will only come to trial if there is new evidence that the prosecuting authorities believe has a reasonable chance of conviction.

I've stuck my neck out but interestingly that was not a criticism I generally received from any of the soldiers or paratroopers I met. I thought they would come 'gunning' for me because they believe they shouldn't be prosecuted. However, we are governed by law and the moment we abandon that, it is the beginning of the end. Once you see the broader picture beyond the tabloid headlines then it's simply about the law pursuing those who are alleged to have broken it.

#### **How did the conflict develop from 'war' to the 'peace process'?**

I've long maintained that it was a war but it was not referred to as such by the politicians

**"WHAT DO YOU DO? DO YOU CARRY ON KILLING EACH OTHER INDEFINITELY OR DO YOU TRY AND FIND A COMPROMISE?"**

until after the Good Friday Agreement when Tony Blair and others referred to it as "the war in Ireland". It was a war and I've yet to meet a soldier or paramilitary who says anything to the contrary. The problem with identifying it as a 'war', politically, is that it legitimises the other side as a combatant.

However, how three warring factions: the IRA, Loyalists and the Brits in the end came to make peace is a remarkable story.

It would not have happened without the IRA deciding that the war was effectively over by the end of the 1980s and a recognition that they weren't going to drive the Brits into the sea. The Brits also realised that they weren't going to defeat the IRA.

What do you do? Do you carry on killing each other indefinitely or do you try and find a compromise? That's the remarkable thing about the Good Friday Agreement. It led to the astonishing sight of Martin McGuinness and Ian Paisley sharing power. I think both those people are sorely missed. If they had been alive today we might not be in the current dreadful mess where there has been no devolved government at Stormont for the last three years.

**2019 is also the centenary of the outbreak of the Irish War of Independence and the subsequent Civil War. To what extent were The Troubles influenced by these previous conflicts?**

I think it's important to have some knowledge of that early history. The 1916 Easter Rising was the beginning of the modern Troubles and the IRA. The British created martyrs by executing the leaders of the Rising. It was an act of monumental folly because it gave a huge groundswell of support to Republicanism.

This resulted in Sinn Féin candidates being elected in Ireland during the British general election of 1918. They refused to go to Westminster, as they do today, and set up their own parliament – the First Dáil Eireann. The army of that first Sinn Féin assembly government was the Irish Republican Army. The IRA, whatever its manifestations, owes its allegiance to the First Dáil and if you ask where the authority lies today, it is still that.

That then erupted into the War of Independence. This included the Black and Tans and the atrocities that they committed. The IRA was also guilty of equal atrocities and the war resulted in Michael Collins and his delegation visiting Downing Street and negotiating with Lloyd George. Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness did exactly the same thing with Tony Blair and McGuinness even sat in the same seat that had been occupied by Collins.

So that was the pattern. Collins agreed to what was thought to be a temporary partition.

A masked protestor participates in a riot in Belfast, 1981

The agreement was that the two parts of the island would come together at some stage and you would have Irish unity. Collins called the Anglo-Irish Treaty the "freedom to achieve freedom" but of course the Unionists objected.

There was then a civil war between pro-Treaty and anti-Treaty forces. The Irish Civil War, which tends to have been blocked out of British knowledge of Irish history, led to further splits in the IRA and its evolution up to 1969 through to 1998.

**To what extent is Ireland a victim of its own history?**

Given its past there is a certain inevitability to what happens in Ireland. Is its history responsible for its problems? The answer, unfortunately, has to be yes. We just have to hope that everybody has learned from the lessons of the last half-century and recognises that we must never go there again.



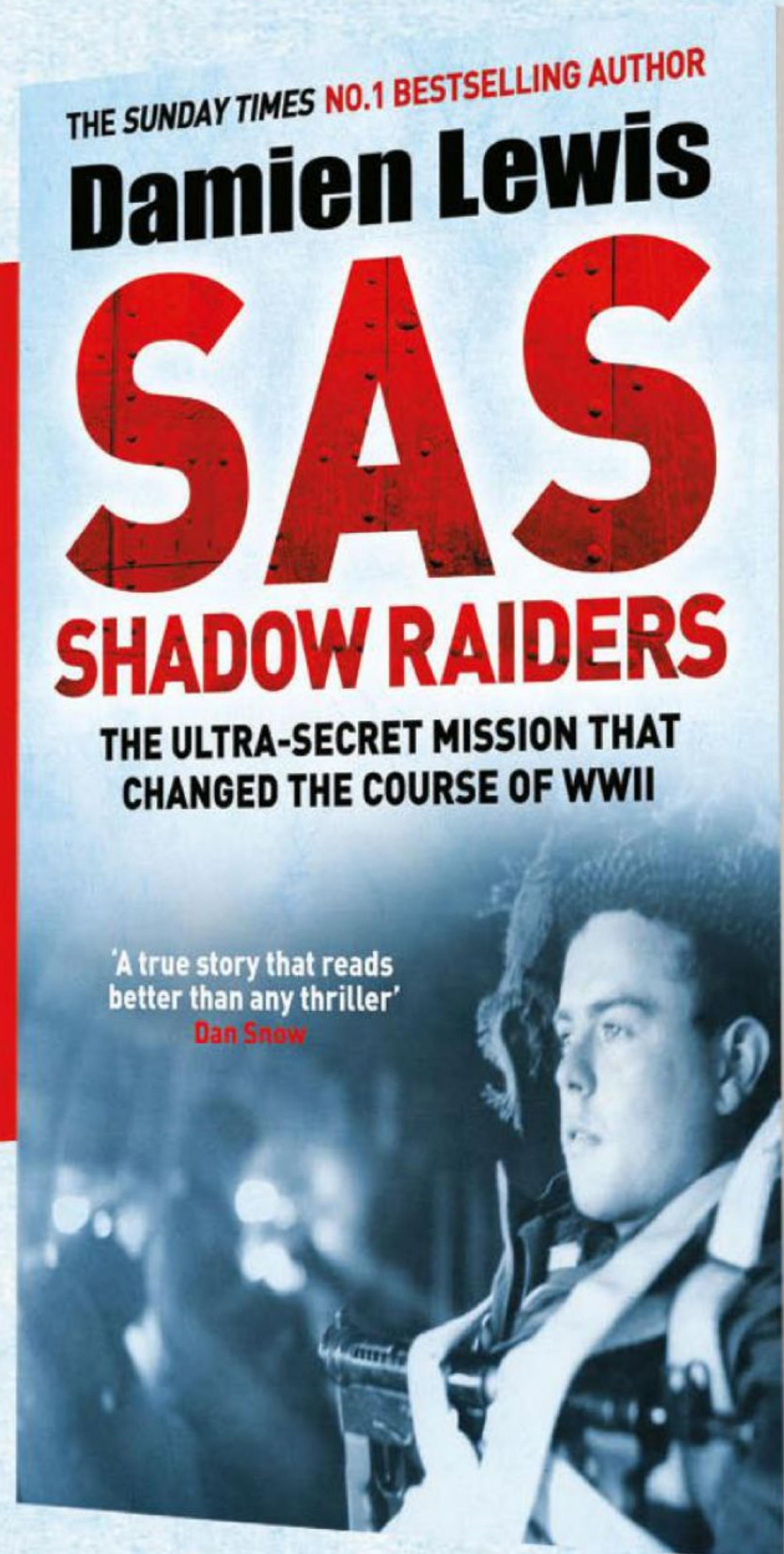
*The Battle of the Bogside was a large communal riot that was fought in Derry-Londonderry between 12-14 August 1969. The violence resulted in the British Army being deployed to restore control*

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# KÖNIGGRÄTZ

WORDS MURRAY DAHM

The Prussians isolated, trapped and destroyed the army of the Austrian Empire, using a combination of new technologies and hastening the process of German unification

**T**he battle of Königgrätz (also known as the battle of Sadowa or the battle of Chlum) was the most decisive clash between the armies of Prussia and those of Austria and her allies during the short, seven-week long, Austro-Prussian War in 1866.

The war itself is also known under several different titles. Königgrätz was one of the largest battles of the age with almost half a million men fighting on the field.

## Rivalry of Austria and Prussia

The context of the Austro-Prussian War was one of nationalism and the unification of German states. At the time, the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia were the two largest and most dominant forces in the German-speaking world. There were actually 37 separate states in the German Confederation but their unification became a hot topic known as 'The German Question' in the post Napoleonic world. In the early 19th century Prussia and

Austria had been obligated to be allies against Napoleon, but from 1815 tensions had grown over which of the states would lead the new ideology of German nationalism; unification under Prussia was known as 'Little Germany' and under Austria 'Big Germany'. Events of the 1848 Revolution, however, showed that Austria was not going to take the lead in such a nationalist movement and this opened the way for the kingdom of Prussia to be the key stakeholder. During the 1848 Revolution,

**"IT IS STILL DEBATED WHETHER THE PRUSSIAN MINISTER PRESIDENT AND FOREIGN MINISTER, OTTO VON BISMARCK, ORCHESTRATED ALL THESE EVENTS IN ORDER TO BRING ABOUT A WAR WITH AUSTRIA"**



Austrian and Russian forces brutally crushed the Hungarian Revolution in 1849 (concessions would be granted in the aftermath of 1866, creating the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1867). The events leading up to the war of 1866 were the positioning of Prussia to be the dominant force in the unification of Germany.

Another debated topic in 19th century politics was the Schleswig-Holstein Question. This involved the disputed land between Prussia and Denmark in the Jutland Peninsula. Denmark claimed the disputed territory in 1848 but a Prussian army came to the aid of the German-speaking majority. The war ended in Danish victory in 1851 but the question was unresolved. In 1863 another attempt to integrate the territory into the Kingdom of Denmark was made leading to a second war in 1864. Prussia again invaded, this time with Austria as an ally. The alliance was so successful that they invaded Denmark itself, eventually occupying all of the Danish mainland. The Treaty of Vienna ceded the disputed territories to Prussia and Austria from Denmark (losing 40 per cent of her total area

## "KÖNIGGRÄTZ WAS ONE OF THE LARGEST BATTLES OF THE AGE WITH ALMOST HALF A MILLION MEN FIGHTING ON THE FIELD"

and population). Prussia wanted to absorb the territories into her kingdom as provinces, but Austria wanted them to be independent autonomous duchies. Under the Gastein Convention of 1865, Prussia would control Schleswig and Austria Holstein.

The rest of Europe, as well as the other German states, reacted negatively to the Convention but it set the stage for war between the two rivals the following year.

It is still debated whether the Prussian Minister President and Foreign Minister, Otto von Bismarck, orchestrated all these events in order to bring about a war with Austria and even to

achieve German unification with Prussia as the dominant power. This has been claimed, Bismarck himself doing so, but it seems highly unlikely since the outstanding successes of Prussian arms were not anticipated at the start of 1864. Much more likely is Bismarck's manipulation of opportunity and circumstance, especially quickly exploiting unexpected successes to Prussia's advantage. He proved his abilities now in assessing the moment to strike against Austria in 1866. Russia, Austria's ally in 1848, had been put off-side by Austria's joining the French and British alliance against Russia in the Crimean War in 1854-55. Prussia had also supported Russia during the January Uprising in Poland in 1863, Austria had not. Bismarck also met with the French Emperor, Napoleon III, to seek assurances that France would not intervene

*The Prussian King, Wilhelm I oversees the defeat of the Austrians accompanied by Chancellor Bismarck, Moltke, and Minister of War, Albrecht Roon*

## OPPOSING FORCES



### PRUSSIA

VS

### AUSTRIA

#### LEADERS

Helmuth von Moltke, Prince Friedrich Karl of Prussia, Prince Frederick of Prussia, Karl von Bittenfeld

#### INFANTRY

Left - 55,000  
Centre - 44,000  
Right - 40,000  
Reserve - 47,000  
**TOTAL - 186,000**

#### CAVALRY

Left - 6,500  
Right - 6,500  
Reserve - 11,500  
**TOTAL - 24,500**

#### GUNS

Left - 176  
Centre - 134  
Right - 140  
Reserve - 320  
**TOTAL - 770**



*Far right: The Austrian commander, Ludwig (Lajos) von Benedek. Of Hungarian descent, the defeat at Königgrätz ended his career*

in an Austro-Prussian conflict. Prussia also had an ally in Italy, who wanted to end Austrian control of several northern Italian provinces, meaning the Austrians would be facing an enemy on two fronts and would necessarily need to divert some of her forces south.

### A pretext for war

In early 1866 the issue of the status and governance of Schleswig-Holstein erupted. Austria brought the issue before the German Diet on 1 January, Prussia declared the Gastein Convention null and void and, on 7 June invaded (Austrian controlled) Holstein. The German Diet voted nine to six to mobilise against Prussia on 14 June and Bismarck declared that the German Confederation was ended and both sides mobilised for war.

The other German states were conflicted on which side to ally with. Several saw that they could not stand against Prussian arms but other autocratic rulers feared their own position if they did not side with Austria. Fear of Prussian expansion was also widespread. In the end the southern German states allied with Austria, including Hanover, Bavaria, Württemburg, Baden, but also Saxony and Hesse, and others. Prussia had allies in Oldenburg, Brunswick and both Macklenburg houses. Several states (including Liechtenstein and Luxembourg) remained neutral.

### Preparations and technologies

The Second Schleswig War had shown that the military reforms in Prussia, undertaken since

## "THE PRUSSIAN RAIL SYSTEM WAS MORE ADVANCED AND EXTENSIVE THAN THAT IN AUSTRIA AND THIS ALLOWED PRUSSIAN FORCES TO MOBILISE, CONCENTRATE AND BE TRANSPORTED MUCH FASTER THAN THOSE IN AUSTRIA"

1862 (and one of Bismarck's first successes) had proved highly effective. These included the adoption of universal conscription (which made Prussia's potential army much larger). Austria still used old conscription methods which meant the majority of her troops were poorly trained despite having a massive paper strength of ten corps of 83,000 men each. In reality she could only field 320,000 men. Prussian conscripts by contrast were drilled to a much higher degree. Prussian divisions theoretically contained 15,000 men, 700 cavalry and 24 guns each but actual numbers differed. Prussia, aided by a booming economy, also adopted the Dreyse needle gun, a breech-loading, bolt-action rifle capable of faster and more accurate fire than the older muzzle-loading Lorenz rifles of the Austrian army. Prussian troops could fire five rounds a minute, the Austrians could manage two.

Austria was also still burdened with the costs of the Hungarian Revolution and its aftermath. Also, while Prussian reforms had been incredibly effective against the Danish, they had shown that her troops were superior to those of her then-allies, Austria.

Another important factor in the Austro-Prussian war was the use of railroads. The Prussian rail system was more advanced and extensive than that in Austria and this allowed Prussian forces to mobilise, concentrate and be transported much faster than those in Austria. The Prussian Chief of the General Staff, Helmuth von Moltke, assessed that Prussia's five railway lines could concentrate almost 300,000 men in under four weeks whereas Austria's single rail line would take almost twice the time to amass less men. In actuality the use of rail was not seamless, but it marked the way of the future.

### Invasion

Moltke mobilised his forces on the Prussian border for an invasion of Bohemia through Saxony. This began on 16 June. The Saxons, allied with Austria, were defeated near Dresden and abandoned their own territory to concentrate their forces with the Austrians. The Austrians, meanwhile, had been amassing for a defensive strategy at Olmütz in Moravia in order to protect Vienna. Preliminary engagements were fought in the last days of June – an Austrian army defeated the Italians at Custoza,

*The first Prussian Regiment of Guards storms Chlum in the course of this decisive Prussian victory*



## THE BATTLE OF KÖNIGGRÄTZ

and Hanover (unexpectedly) defeated a Prussian army at Langensalza, but surrendered two days later. Elements of the Prussian advance were met by Austrian forces, but these engagements were indecisive although the Austrians suffered heavy casualties.

The Austrians had checked the Prussians at Trautenau (Trutnov), their only victory against Prussian forces during the war, but the Prussians were victorious at Gitschin (Jicín).

The Austrians then moved to the fortress of Josefstadt (Josefov) and to defend the mountain passes into Bohemia. Marching against them were three Prussian armies: the First Army under the command of Moltke (although nominally commanded by King Wilhelm), Second Army (commanded by Crown Prince Frederick and Leonhard von Blumenthal) and the Elbe Army (commanded by Karl von Bittenfeld).

Using modern telegraph communications to his advantage, Moltke was able to coordinate and concentrate his three separate forces with precision. He guessed that the Austrian commander, Ludwig von Benedek, would retreat to the Elbe River. Benedek was of Hungarian descent but unwaveringly loyal to the monarchy and had come to fame in suppressing the Hungarian Revolution in 1849 and then in the battles of the Second War of Italian Unification in 1859, especially at San Martino. He was old-fashioned and believed courage and valour were the soldier's most important tools on the battlefield. He also knew his limitations as a commander and this may have been the cause of his reticence on the battlefield. The preferred

Austrian method was Stoßtaktik (shock tactics), 1,000 man columns engaging with the enemy at close quarters. These tactics suited Benedek's concept of war but were sadly outdated.

The accuracy and rapid fire of the Prussian rifles would decimate the courageous advances of the Austrians, inflicting huge losses.

### Austrian backs to the wall

Benedek knew from the losses inflicted in the opening engagements of the war that his army faced annihilation if he faced the Prussians en masse. He also realised his dispositions had been in error. On 30 June, he requested that the emperor, Franz Joseph I, make peace but this was refused. Benedek took position on high ground between Sadowa and Königgrätz with the Elbe River at his rear.

His position was sighted by the Prussians on the evening of 2 July and plans were made to attack the following morning. The Prussian Elbe and First armies were in position but communication with the Second Army, on the Prussian left flank, was broken and so old-fashioned dispatch riders were sent, reaching the Second Army at 4.00am on 3 July. Nonetheless, the Second Army immediately leapt into action and marched to close the trap on the Austrians later that day.

### Opening salvos

The Austrians had a superior position



Prussian officers Otto von Bismarck and Helmuth von Moltke on the battlefield

defended by artillery and defence works erected on high ground stretching from Problus (Probluz) to Chlum. They also outnumbered the two Prussian armies which initially opposed them; the Elbe army was 39,000 strong and the First Army had 85,000 men. The Austrians had 215,000 men, with the army of Saxony on their left flank. In the rain, the Austrian artillery opened fire just before 8.00am. The Austrians should



Frederick Charles, Prince of Prussia, victor at Battle of Königgrätz in 1866

have had the edge in regard to artillery, with modern, breech-loading rifled artillery whereas the Prussians still used smooth bore, muzzle-loading cannons. Despite the greater accuracy and longer range of the Austrian artillery, this edge would not prove decisive. This opening artillery barrage pinned the Elbe Army under Bittenfeld in place and allowed the Saxons to withdraw. On the left flank of the Prussian centre, General Eduard von Fransecky advanced with the 7th Division into the Swiepwald Forest where he clashed with two Austrian Corps.

Fransecky was tasked with clearing the Austrian centre and covering the Prussian right flank until the arrival of the Second Army. The First Army moved in support of Fransecky, capturing Sadowa and wading across the Bistritz (Bystrice) River. This advance was, however, halted by accurate Austrian artillery fire. All reserves were committed by midday but the Second Army had not yet arrived.

### A battle lost?

Some commentators have argued that Benedek could have won the battle at the moment the Prussian First Army's advance was halted if he had ordered a charge by his cavalry. Benedek had placed his cavalry behind both his guns and his infantry corps so it is unlikely he would have committed his cavalry to such a move. What is more, the Prussian 7th Division held the Swiepwald and were thus relatively immune to artillery fire and would discourage any cavalry charge since an Austrian cavalry charge into the Prussian centre would then have the Prussian 7th Division on their right flank and perhaps even in their rear. The damp ground was also a factor to dissuade Benedek from ordering a cavalry charge. Up to now Benedek's superior numbers and the greater range of his artillery kept the Prussians at bay and the battle was going in his favour.



Kaiser Wilhelm I in hussar uniform (he would accept the title of Kaiser following victory in the Franco-Prussian War in 1871)

# THE BATTLE OF KÖNIGGRÄTZ, 1866

## 01 BEFORE THE BATTLE

The Prussian Elbe Army and First Army make contact with the Austrians on 2 July. They prepare to attack the prepared Austrian defensive positions on 3 July and send word to the Second Army to join them with all haste.

## 02 PRUSSIAN DISPOSITIONS

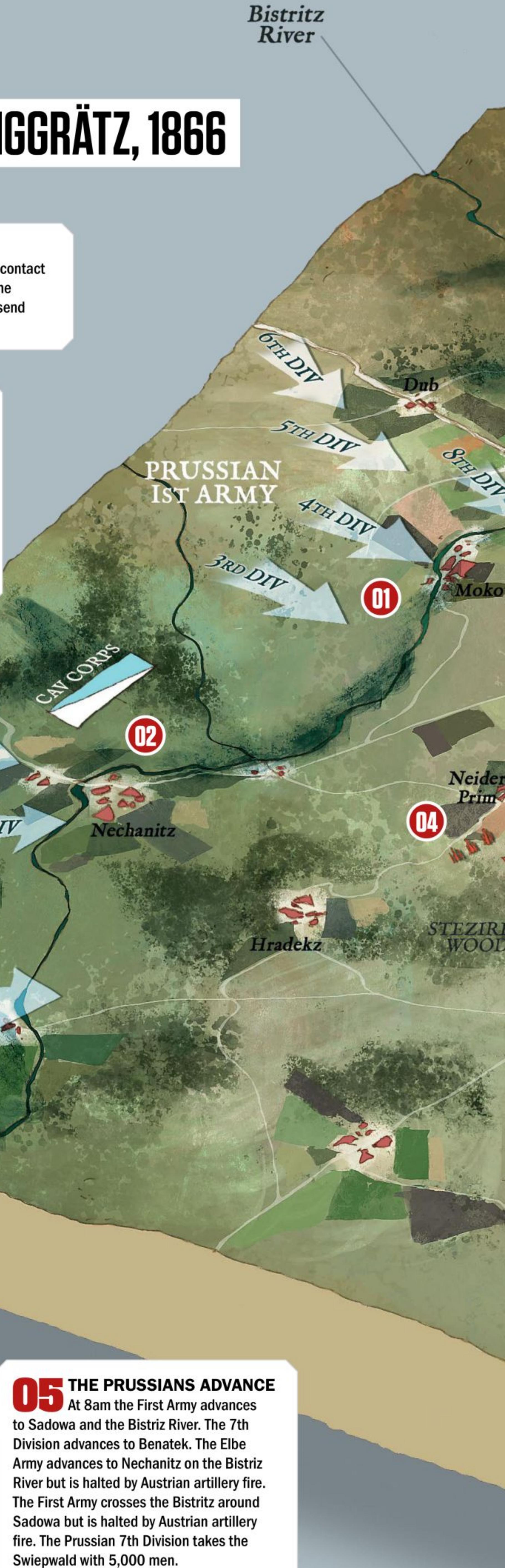
On the Prussian right, Moltke had the Elbe Army with 40,000 men in three divisions, between them and the First Army was the Prussian cavalry Corps. In the Prussian centre, the First Army had six divisions with 85,000 men. These faced the superior guns and prepared positions of the Austrians across the river Bistritz. The Prussian Second Army of 100,000 men in nine divisions was some 20 miles to the north.

## 03 AUSTRIAN DISPOSITIONS

Benedek divided his army into four groups – in the centre III and X Corps: 44,000 men and 134 guns. On the left VIII Corps and the Saxons: 40,000 men and 140 guns. On the right were II and IV Corps with 55,000 men and 176 guns. Each flank was covered by a cavalry division. A reserve of I and VII Corps, heavy cavalry and artillery consisted of 47,000 men, 11,435 cavalry and 320 guns.

## 04 AUSTRIAN ARTILLERY

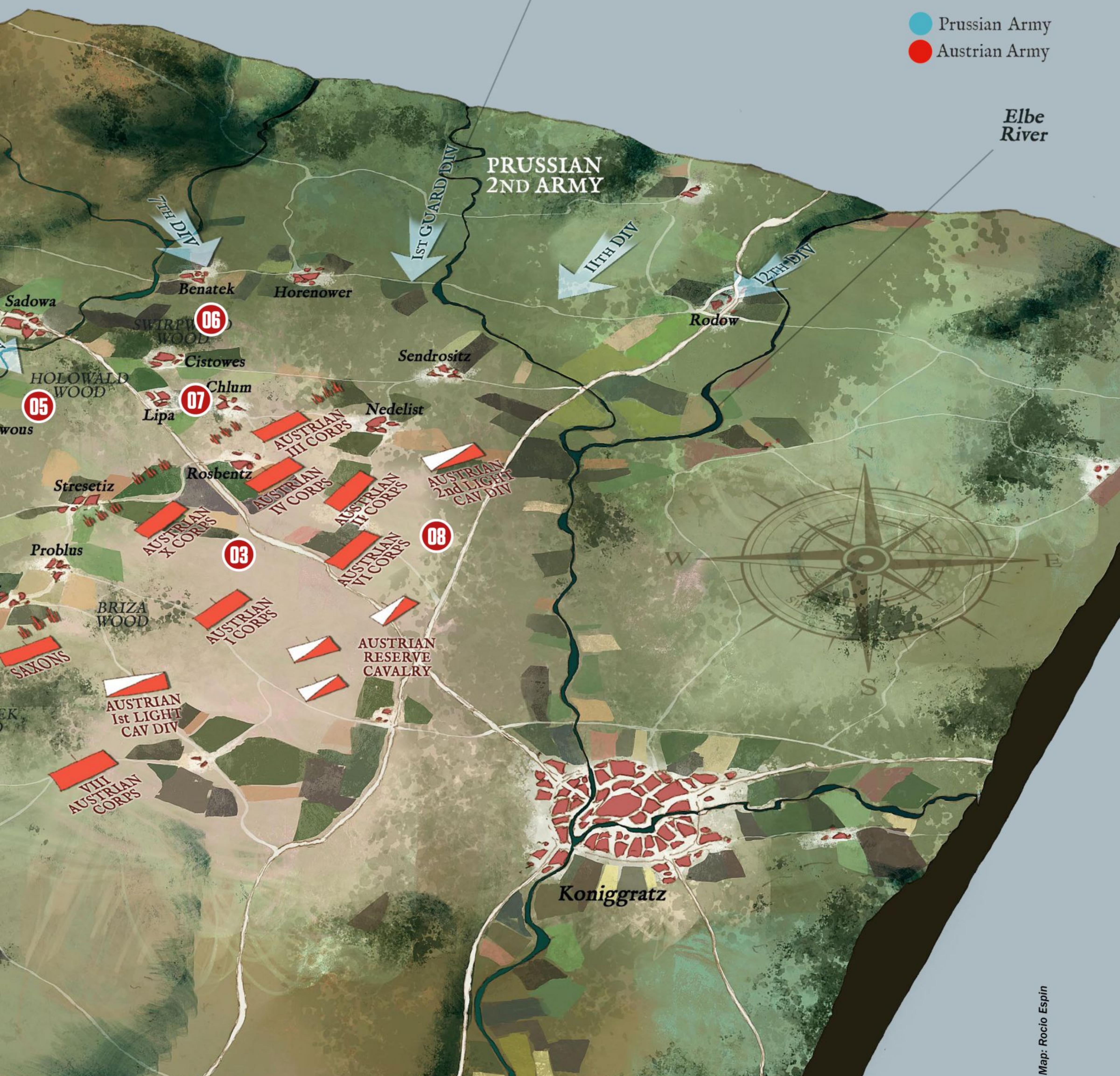
The Austrian Inspector-General of Artillery, Archduke Wilhelm, positioned his superior artillery excellently. They were on the high ground, had clear fields of fire, and could take advantage of their greater range. They would hold the majority of the Prussians at bay for most of the battle.



## 05 THE PRUSSIANS ADVANCE

At 8am the First Army advances to Sadowa and the Bistriz River. The 7th Division advances to Benatek. The Elbe Army advances to Nechanitz on the Bistriz River but is halted by Austrian artillery fire. The First Army crosses the Bistriz around Sadowa but is halted by Austrian artillery fire. The Prussian 7th Division takes the Swiepwald with 5,000 men.

Prussian Army  
Austrian Army



Map: Rocio Espin

**06 AUSTRIAN COUNTERATTACK**

By 10am, determined but futile attempts by separate Austrian Brigades try to retake the Swiepwald but are repulsed. A final bayonet charge by Pöckh's Brigade dislodges the Prussians who have committed all their reserves. Pöckh's position is hit in the flank by the first elements of the Second Army, quickly felling 2,000 men. Benedek does not follow up on Pöckh's initial success.

**07 SECOND ARMY GAINS GROUND**

By 2pm, Benedek is having difficulty in recalling his engaged Corps from the Austrian right. Their flank is now threatened by the Second Army. Withdrawal is eventually achieved but a general retreat follows. The Army of the Elbe and First Army begin to advance. The 1st Guards Division breaks through the Austrian lines to Chlum. Threatened, the Austrian artillery is forced to withdraw.

**08 4.00PM – AUSTRIANS WITHDRAW**

The Elbe Army takes Problus but is halted by a Saxon counterattack allowing the Austrian left to retreat. The Prussian First and Second armies advance. The Austrian line at Chlum is broken and the Austrians begin streaming from the field, crossing the Elbe. Valiant cavalry counterattacks and artillery fire hold off the pursuing Prussians to allow more Austrians to cross.



*Prussian infantry fire on the advancing columns of Austrians*

INGENF & GÖSCHL GR.

The Infantry battle being waged in the Swiepwald also meant that the Austrians could not use their artillery for fear of hitting their own troops. What is more, Austrian troops were only committed to the fighting a brigade at a time which meant they could be defeated by the superior weapons, faster rate of fire, and better training of the Prussians.

The 7th Division held off almost one-quarter of the Austrian strength because they were not attacked in strength. In this way, Benedek nullified his own advantages whilst his men charged into the teeth of the superiorities of the Prussians.

At around 11.00am the Austrians began to manoeuvre to outflank the Prussian 7th Division on their right. Finally, an Austrian charge led by Colonel Pöckh of the 4th Corps, commanding of a brigade consisting of two infantry regiments and a feldjäger battalion, all but dislodged the Prussian 7th Division from the Swiepwald. Benedek, however, refused to order a charge against the pinned Frist and Elbe armies even though his commanders insisted he do so. If Benedek was waiting for a better moment we will never know, because the moment had passed and the battle had turned.

### The arrival of the Second Army

Pöckh's Brigade, flushed from their successful charge, had no time to savour their success. They were suddenly hit with devastating fire on their right flank as the advance units of the Prussian Second Army finally arrived on the field. Pöckh himself was killed and the brigade was obliterated, 2,000 dead in minutes and barely a man unwounded.

At the same time, the Prussian 8th Division strengthened the 7th and the Austrians, who had belatedly moved to outflank the Prussians on their right, now presented their own exposed right flank to the newly arriving Prussian Second Army. The bulk of the Second Army was not in position until approximately 2.30pm but this was still a remarkable feat – marching more than 20 miles and having only received orders at 4.00am that morning.

The balance now shifted decisively. Crown Prince Frederick and the Second Army brought 100,000 fresh Prussian troops to the field and they now outnumbered the Austrians. What is more, the new troops had a vulnerable flank to attack and they lost no time in taking advantage. The Second Army attacked the Austrian right flank as they made more piecemeal attacks on the reinforced Swiepwald. The artillery of the Second Army could also fire on to the Austrian centre. The Prussian cavalry of the 1st Guards Division of the Second Army broke through to the Austrian artillery forcing it to withdraw. It could therefore no longer support any attacks being made by Austrian forces. Benedek was forced to order the general withdrawal of his forces at 3.00pm. The Austrians had already taken heavy casualties but the attacks of the

**"THEY WERE SUDDENLY HIT WITH DEVASTATING FIRE ON THEIR RIGHT FLANK AS THE ADVANCE UNITS OF THE PRUSSIAN SECOND ARMY FINALLY ARRIVED ON THE FIELD. PÖCKH HIMSELF WAS KILLED AND THE BRIGADE WAS OBLITERATED"**



The memorial at Chlum, scene of some of the heaviest fighting and where Prussian forces broke through the Austrian lines

Images: Pudelek



Second Army broke them. Units of the Second Army broke through the Austrian lines and took Chlum (which was in front of the Austrian line facing the Prussian 7th Division). The Austrians were now in complete disarray.

The Elbe Army, held in place since the opening of the battle, now advanced and broke through the Saxons and the Austrian left flank, taking Problus. Wilhelm ordered an advance across the entire Prussian line. The advancing units reached Chlum just as the Austrians had finally forced the 1st Guards Division back into the town. The superior firepower of the advancing Prussians proved decisive and the Austrians were unable to stand before them. A series of cavalry charges and artillery repositioned in the rear allowed the retreating artillery and infantry to cross the Elbe, but these were conducted at a heavy price.

### The cost

The Prussians had lost in total 9,000 men killed or wounded, most from artillery fire and successful counterattacks in the Swiepwald. The Austrians had lost 44,000 men killed or wounded with a further 22,000 captured (along with almost 200 cannons). Some accounts claim these high losses are exaggerated

and place the number of Austrians killed or wounded much lower at around 14,500, others that the 44,000 includes the prisoner tally.

### The aftermath

The victorious Prussians did not pursue aggressively but continued to shadow the Austrians until the armistice on 22 July. Bismarck encouraged Wilhelm to make peace quickly so as not to cause acrimony towards Prussia amongst the other German states. Austria's reputation and position within the German states was severely damaged, indeed the idea of a 'Big Germany' was essentially laid to rest – Austria was permanently excluded from German affairs. By contrast Prussia's position was enhanced and she absorbed several of Austria's allies including Hanover, Hesse and Nassau. Schleswig-Holstein also became a province of Prussia. Saxony was not annexed but joined with Prussia the following year. Liechtenstein and Luxembourg became independent states.

With Austria excluded, Prussia formed and led the North German Confederation, created in 1867 and incorporating all states north of the Main River. Prussia chose not to demand any Austrian territory and thus not

alienate the Austrian Empire entirely. Austria did surrender Venetia to France who then gifted it to the Kingdom of Italy. The remaining German states allied with Prussia in the (more decisive) Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871.

This opened the way for both German unification and the creation of the German Empire under Kaiser Wilhelm I (and with Otto von Bismarck as chancellor) in 1871. The humbled Austria meanwhile, quickly compromised with Hungary, forming the dual-monarchy Austria-Hungary in 1867.

## FURTHER READING

- ★ QUINTIN BARRY *THE ROAD TO KÖNIGGRÄTZ: HELMUTH VON MOLTKE AND THE AUSTRO-PRUSSIAN WAR 1866* (WARWICK: HELION AND COMPANY, 2014).
- ★ GORDON A. CRAIG *THE BATTLE OF KÖNIGGRÄTZ: PRUSSIA'S VICTORY OVER AUSTRIA, 1866* (PHILADELPHIA: UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA PRESS, 1964).
- ★ JOHN A. DREDGER *TACTICS AND PROCUREMENT IN THE HABSBURG MILITARY, 1866-1918: OFFENSIVE SPENDING* (BASINGSTOKE: PALGRAVE/MACMILLAN, 2017)

Images: Alamy

Operator's Handbook

# MITSUBISHI A6

WORDS STUART HADAWAY

Japan's legendary carrier fighter  
distinguished itself in WWII's  
Pacific theatre

## LIMITED PUNCH

The Zero's light construction left it unable to carry heavy armament, although later models had a further machine-gun added to each wing.

Work began on the Mitsubishi A6M in 1937 as a carrier-based fighter for the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service. It entered service in 1940 (the year 2600 in the Japanese calendar) and was officially designated the Navy Type O. This led to the nickname 'Reisen', or 'Zero'. Although the Allies would later officially designate it the 'Zeke' in their reporting system, the name 'Zero' largely stuck on both sides.

On entering service the fast and highly manoeuvrable Zero quickly gained a truly formidable reputation, easily out-flying anything sent against it in the skies over China. In late 1941 its arena spread to the Pacific, and again it dominated the skies against its British and American contemporaries. However it did not take long for the Allies to work out the Zero's strengths and weaknesses, and how to use them.

Instead of dogfighting, quick firing passes were adopted, while the heavier construction and fire-power of the Grumman Hellcats and Wildcats and Vought Corsairs allowed them to soak up the relatively light firepower of the A6M while delivering blows that were devastating to the Zero's light construction. Even so, the Zero remained a mainstay of the Japanese Navy until the very end of the war.

## IMPRESSIVE FUEL TANKS

Between the main fuel tank behind the engine, the tanks in either wing stub, and the optional drop tank, the Zero had a much longer range than other contemporary fighters.



# M 'ZERO'



## MITSUBISHI A6M 'ZERO'

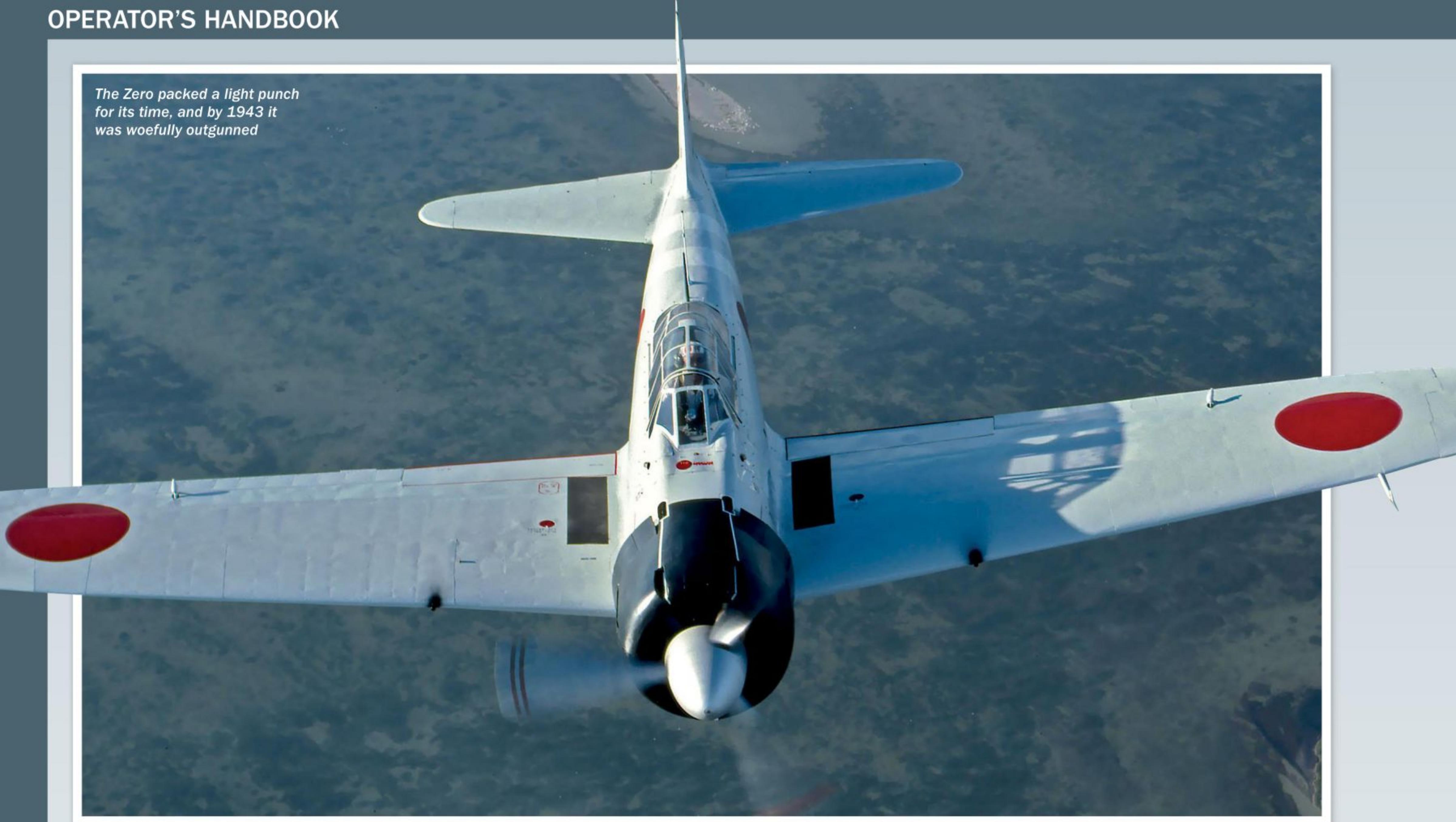
COMMISSIONED:	1937
ORIGIN:	JAPAN
LENGTH:	9.06M (29FT 9IN)
WINGSPAN:	12M (39FT 4IN)
RANGE:	1,870KM (1,160 MILES)
ENGINE:	1X NAKAJIMA NK1C SAKE-12 14-CYLINDER AIR COOLED RADIAL ENGINE
CREW:	1
PRIMARY WEAPONS:	2X 7.7MM (0.303IN) TYPE 97 MACHINE GUNS AND 2X 20MM (0.787IN) TYPE 99-1 MK 3 CANNON

Illustration: Alex Pang

"ON ENTERING SERVICE THE FAST  
AND HIGHLY MANOEUVRABLE  
ZERO QUICKLY GAINED A TRULY  
FORMIDABLE REPUTATION"

# OPERATOR'S HANDBOOK

*The Zero packed a light punch for its time, and by 1943 it was woefully outgunned*



## ARMAMENT

The Zero was armed with 2 x 7.7mm (0.303in) Type 97 machine guns in the cowling over the engine, firing through the propeller and supplied with 500 rounds per gun, and 2 x 20mm (0.787in) Type 99-1 cannon in the wings, each with 60 rounds (increased to 100 rounds from 1941). The armament was relatively light, and proved inadequate against later American carrier fighters. A small load of 2 x 60kg (130lb) bombs could be carried, or a fixed 250kg (550lb) bomb for kamikaze attacks late in the war.

*In late 1944 desperation drove the Japanese to use the Zero as a kamikaze flying bomb*



A restored Nakajima Sakae NK1C



## ENGINE

Made by the Nakajima Aircraft Company, the Sakae ('Prosperity') was a twin-row 14-cylinder air cooled radial engine. The type was used by the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service as the NK1, with four models (the Zero used the 'C') used on a range of aircraft. The Imperial Japanese Army Air Force also used it for single and twin-engine aircraft as the 'Ha' series. It was rated at 700 kW (940 hp) for take-off and 710 kW (950 hp) at an operational height of 4,200 m (13,800 ft).

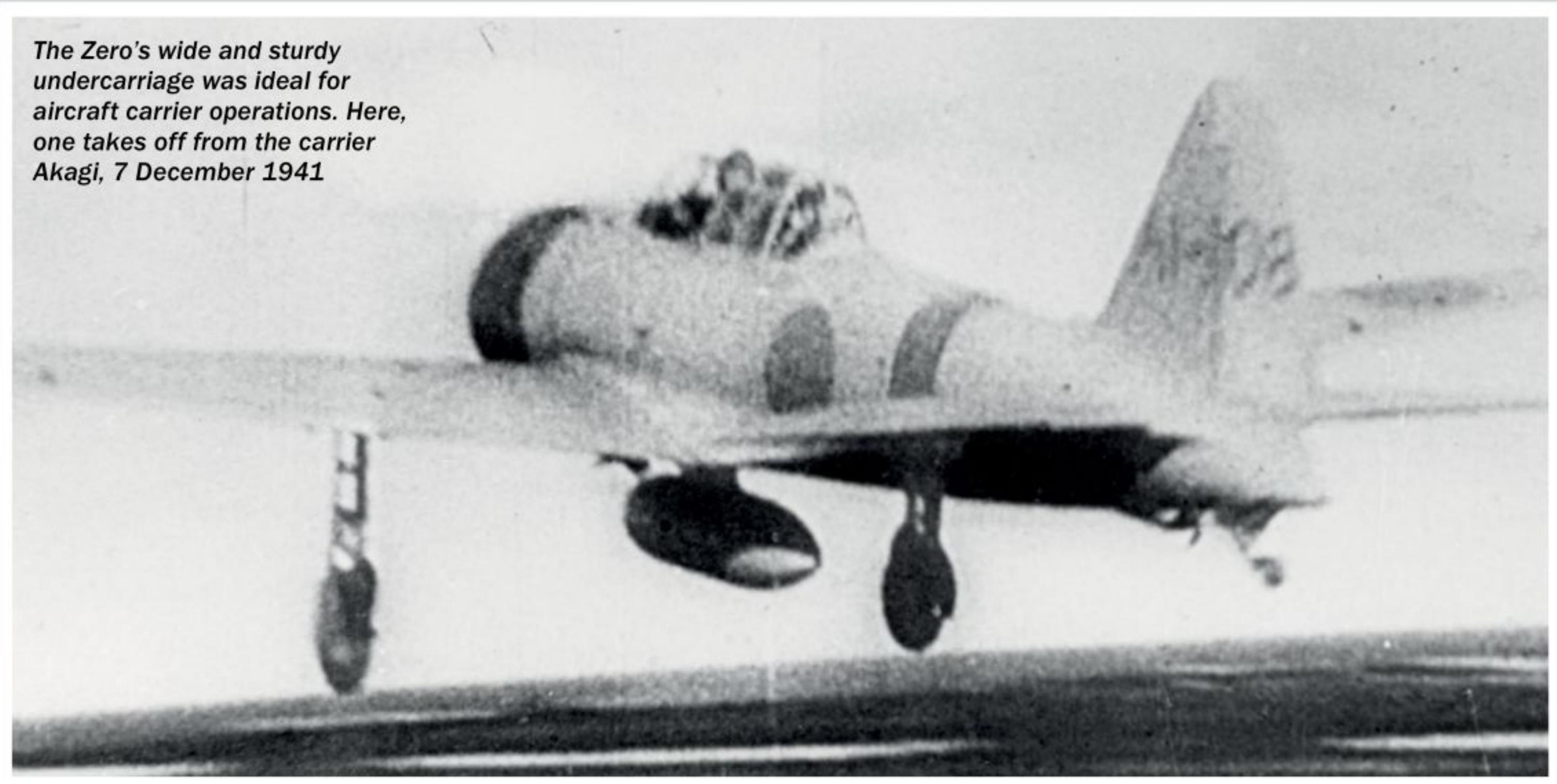
"EVERYTHING WAS DONE TO SAVE WEIGHT, WITH NO ARMOUR OR SELF-SEALING FUEL TANKS, MAKING THE AIRCRAFT LONG-RANGED, FAST, MANOEUVRABLE BUT DESPERATELY VULNERABLE TO ENEMY FIRE"

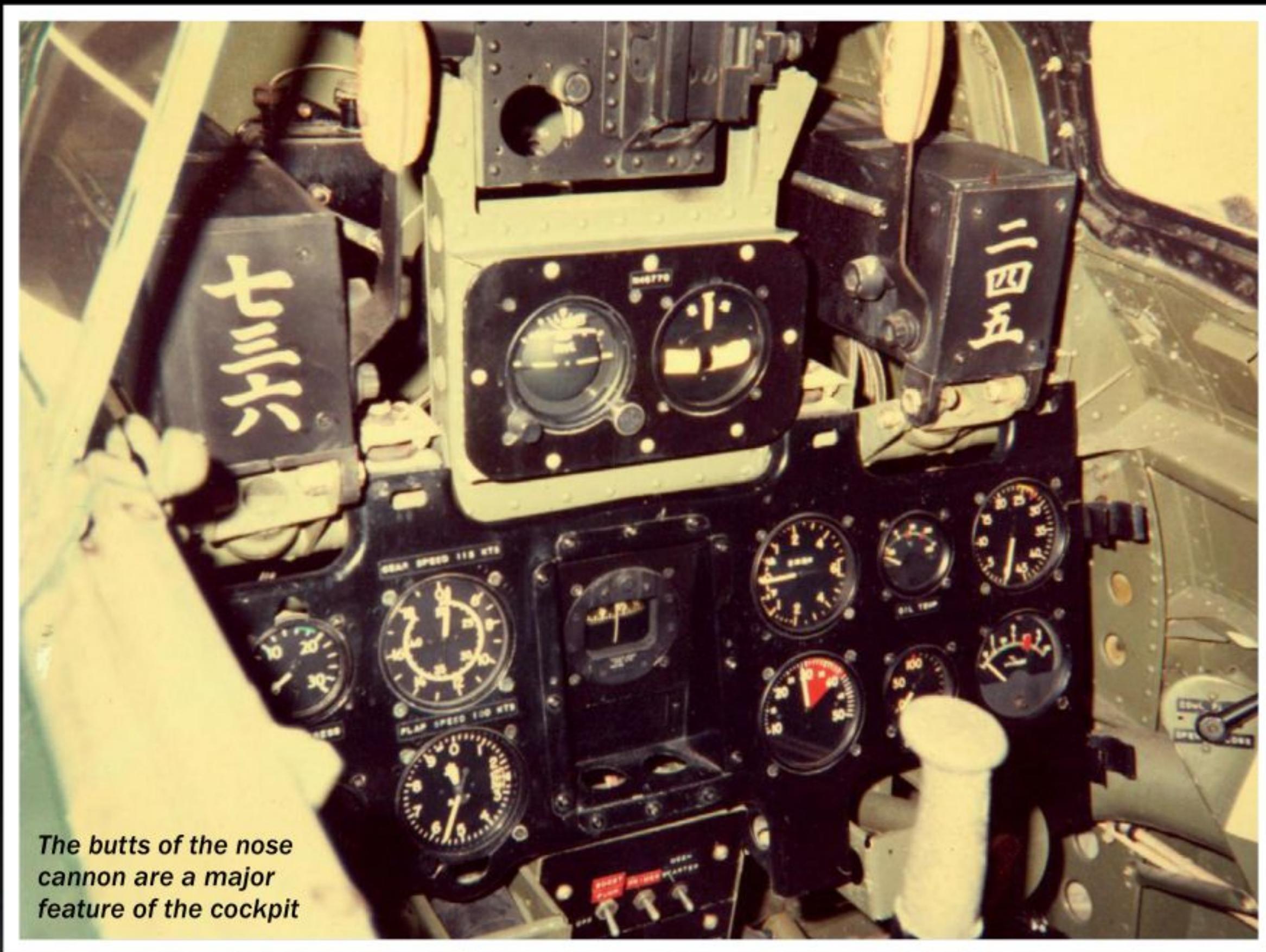


## DESIGN

A low-wing cantilever design, the Zero was designed for aircraft carrier operations with a short wingspan and wide, sturdy undercarriage. With light construction and a low-wing loading, it was highly manoeuvrable except at high speeds, and had a very low stalling speed. Everything was done to save weight, with no armour or self-sealing fuel tanks, making the aircraft long-ranged, fast, manoeuvrable but desperately vulnerable to enemy fire. Most of the aircraft was built from an aluminium alloy formed to a secret formula called 'extra super duralumin'.

*The Zero's wide and sturdy undercarriage was ideal for aircraft carrier operations. Here, one takes off from the carrier Akagi, 7 December 1941*

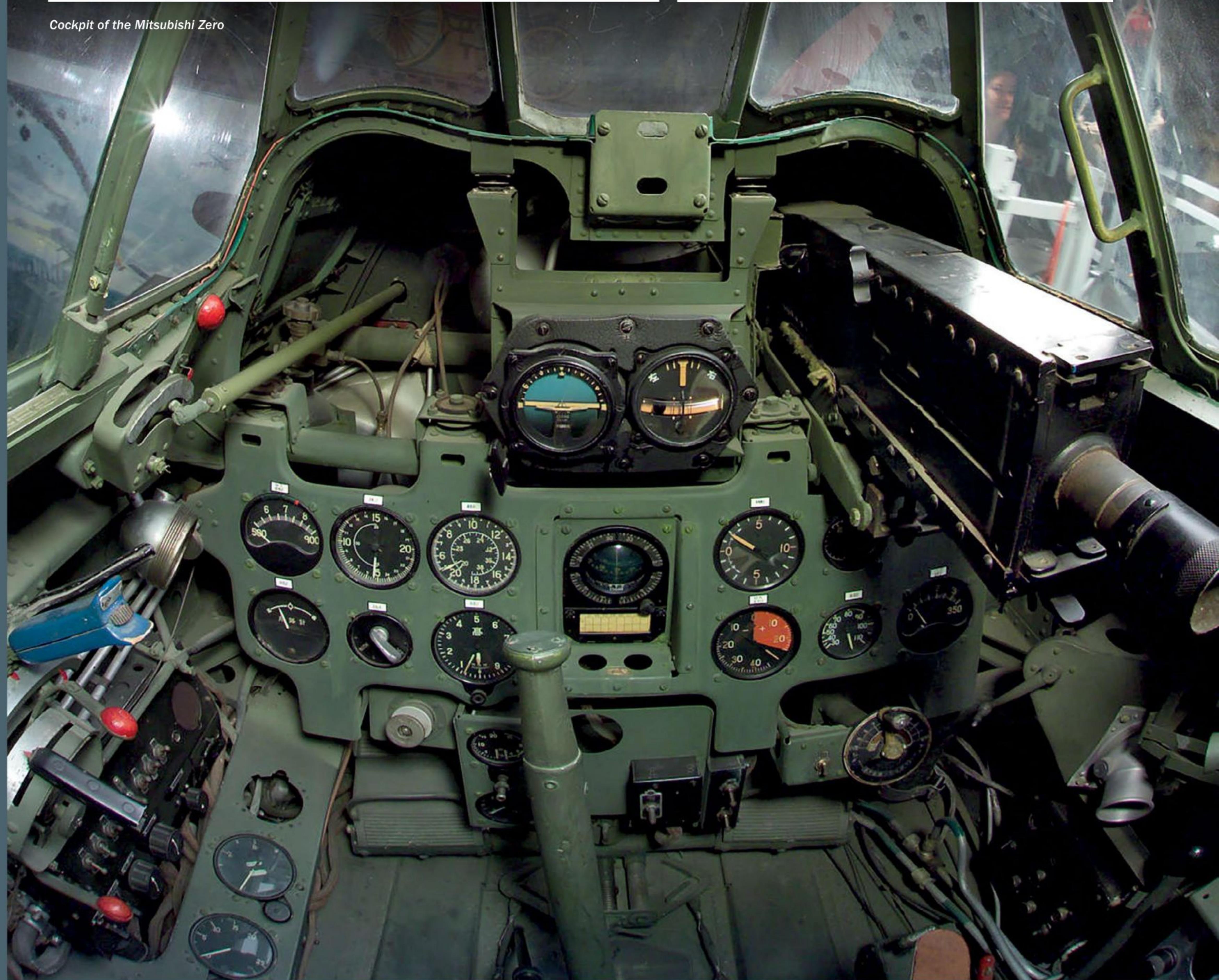
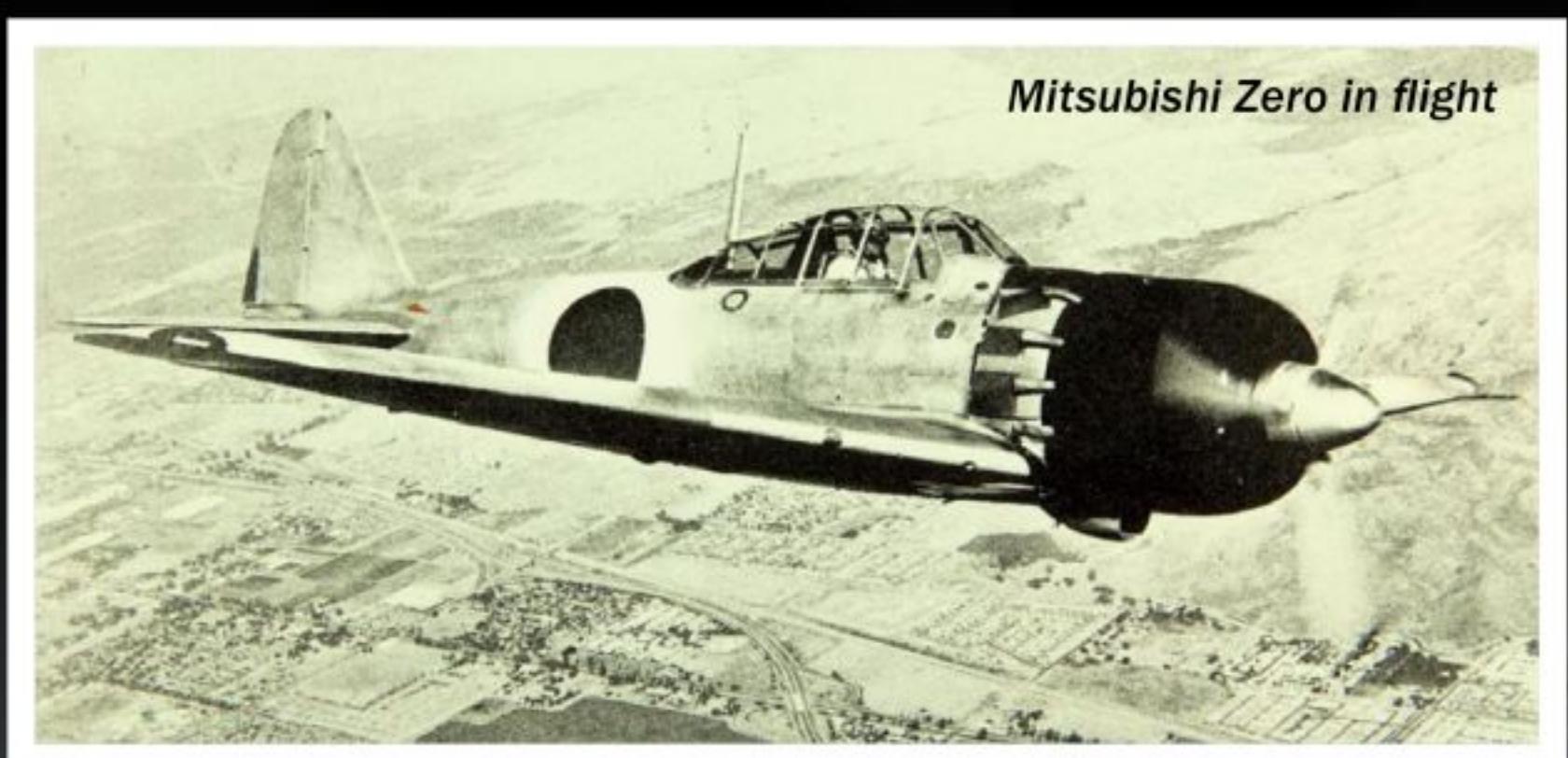




Cockpit of the Mitsubishi Zero

## COCKPIT

The Mitsubishi A6M had a fully enclosed cockpit that followed the general pattern of most contemporary fighters. A main instrument panel with essential flight indicators in front of the pilot had the gunsight above, flanked on either side by the butts of the machine guns. The panel on the left side of the cockpit contained the throttles and fuel tank selectors. On the right were the radio and its controls, including a direction finding set for navigation at sea, along with the undercarriage and tail-hook switches.



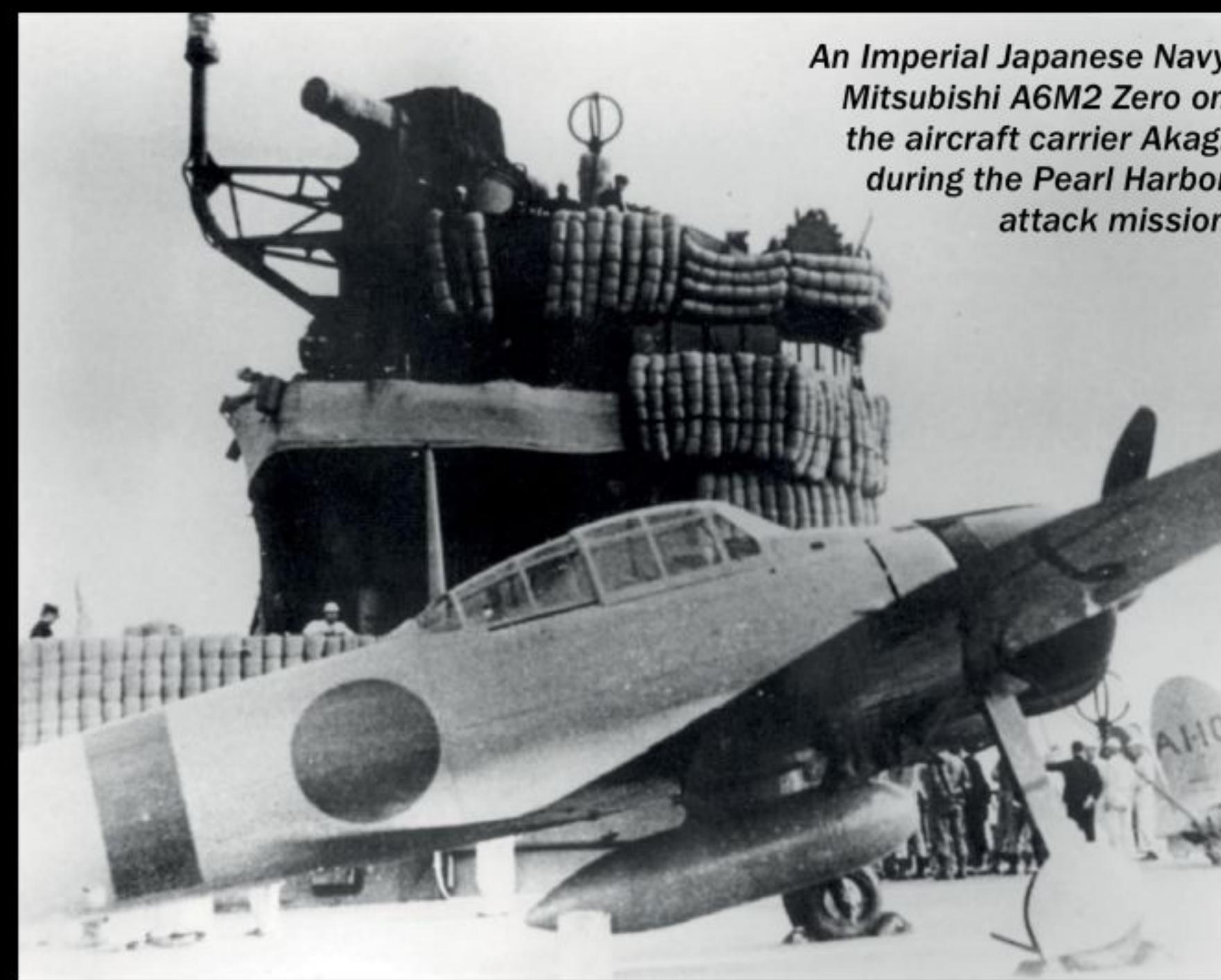
## MITSUBISHI A6M 'ZERO'

### SERVICE HISTORY

The Zero entered service in July 1940, and first saw action over China in September. It rapidly proved a formidable fighter in dogfights against Chinese and American (mercenary) units. Fast and highly manoeuvrable, it was also well suited to carrier operations. In late 1941 it was at the spearhead of Japan's expansion across the Pacific where it easily outclassed all of its initial opponents. However by 1943 the tables were turning with newer Allied aircraft types and tactics exploiting the Zero's weaknesses, most especially its light construction and inability to take substantial punishment.

By 1944 the type was effectively obsolete, despite several upgrades and minor developments. However a lack of suitable replacements kept the type in service and in production. Of the 11,000 built some 4,000 were built in 1944 and nearly 1,800 in 1945. Pilot quality was also suffering badly, and by October 1944 the type was used for suicide attacks.

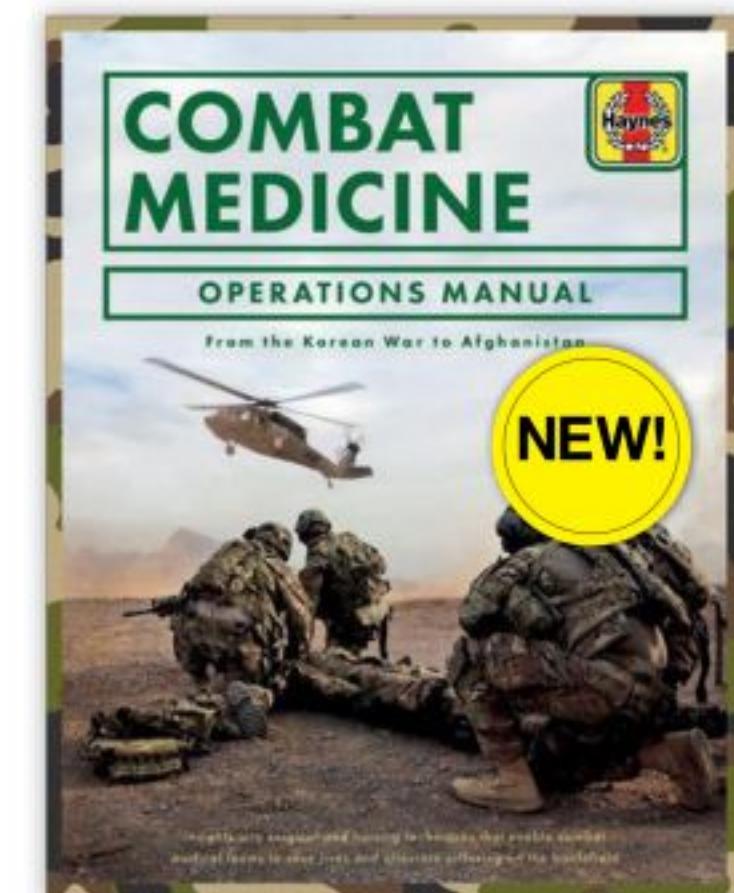
**"IN LATE 1941 IT WAS AT THE SPEARHEAD OF JAPAN'S EXPANSION ACROSS THE PACIFIC WHERE IT EASILY OUT-CLASSED ALL OF ITS INITIAL OPPONENTS"**



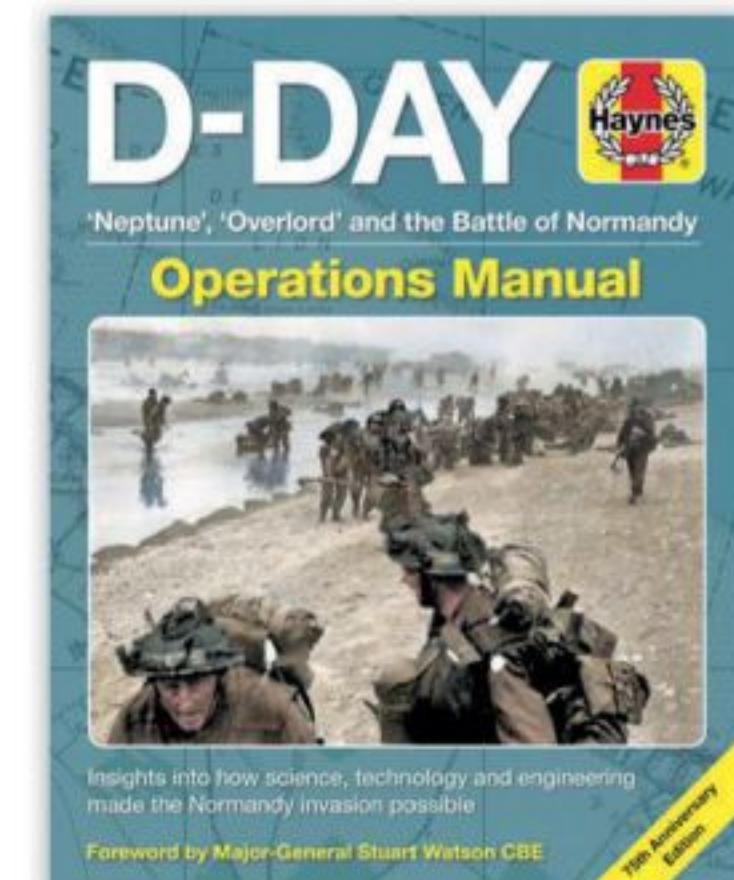
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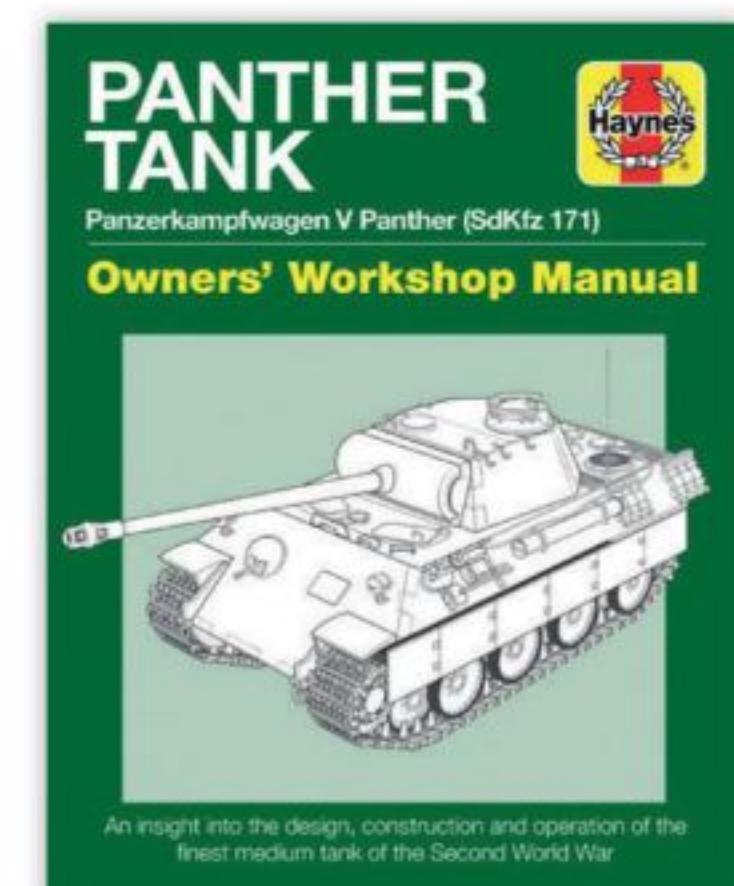
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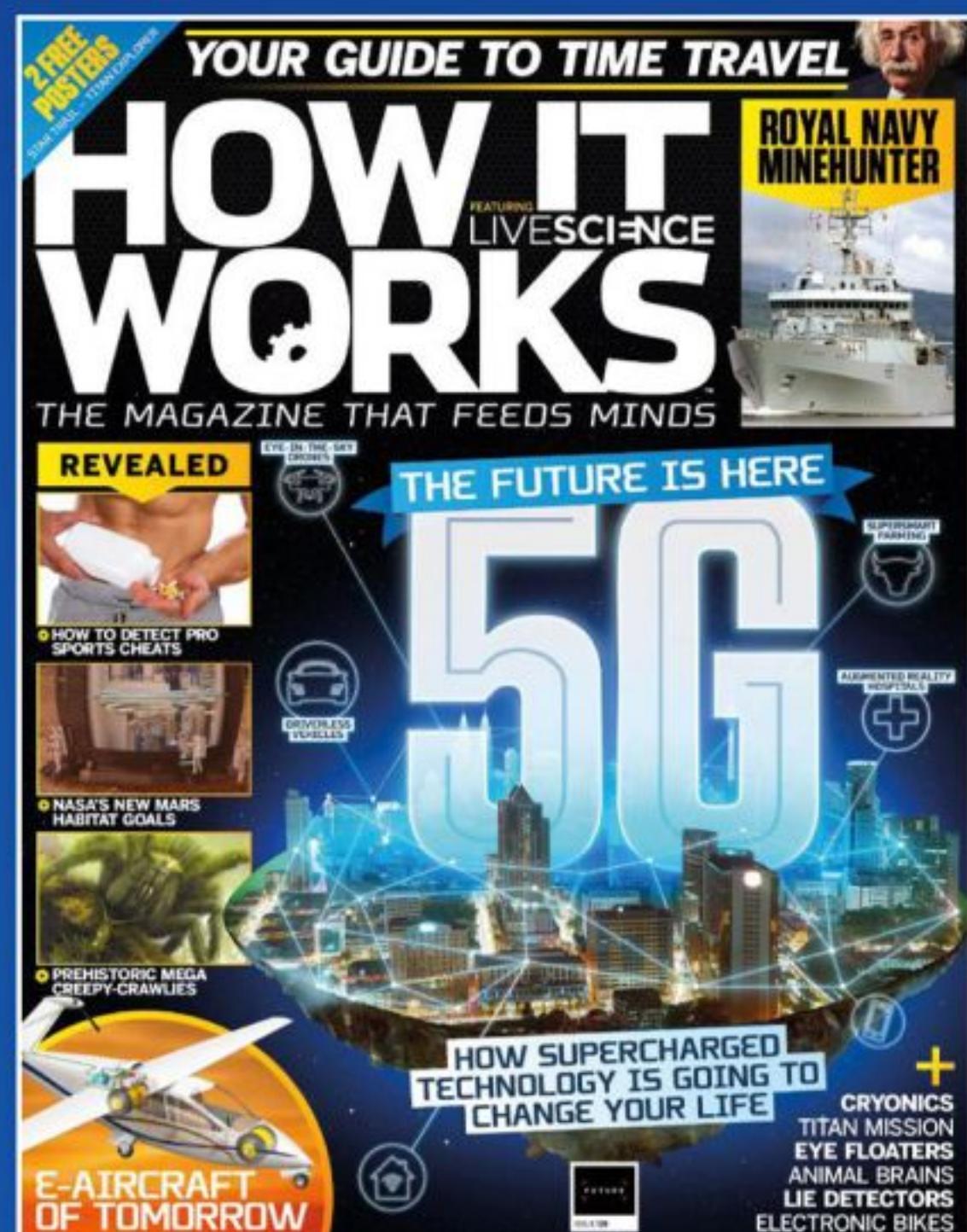


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**78 OPINION: MYTH OF THE RED ARMY 'STEAMROLLER'**  
HISTORIAN AND FORMER ARMY SURGEON PRIT BUTTAR ARGUES THAT THE EASTERN FRONT WAS WON BY MORE THAN NUMBERS



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# THE MYTH OF THE RED ARMY 'STEAMROLLER'

The Soviet Union's overwhelming victories on the Eastern Front have traditionally been characterised as huge waves of infantry and armour thrown against outnumbered Wehrmacht lines. However, as Dr Prit Buttar suggests, this is a severe oversimplification of the theatre where WWII was won



**I**t is a widely held view that history is written largely by the victors. In this context the historiography of the Eastern Front in the Second World War is an interesting exception.

English language books about the Second World War began to appear within a few years of the end of the conflict. Inevitably they concentrated at first on those theatres where English-speaking soldiers had been heavily involved – the war in North Africa and Italy, the Battles of Britain and the Atlantic, the Normandy Landings, and the war in the Pacific and Asia against Japan. Equally inevitably they initially focused on the campaigns in which the Western Allies were victorious, and accounts of setbacks like May 1940 appeared a little later. Perhaps to explain these defeats, the prowess of the Wehrmacht of 1940 was emphasised and there was less attention to the failures and shortcomings of Germany's opponents.

By the early 1950s many of the German officers who had been involved in the fighting on the Eastern Front had begun to write their

memoirs. The climate in which these books were published was very different from the era of the Second World War.

The Soviet Union was now the enemy of the western world and Germany was beginning the process of rehabilitation that would lead to the creation of the Bundeswehr.

Many veterans of the Wehrmacht joined its ranks and helped shape its structure and doctrine, and inevitably this led to growing interest in the conflict between Germany and the Soviet Union: what lessons could be learned that might help the Western Powers triumph in a future conflict?

The accounts of the fighting on the Eastern Front that emerged from the memoirs of German officers followed the same pattern. The technical skills of the Wehrmacht were emphasised, and setbacks were consistently blamed upon interference by Hitler. Few, if any, of these accounts gave any credit to the Red Army, and there was almost no mention of the war crimes committed during the occupation of the western parts of the Soviet Union.

Inevitably most of the Soviet senior officers who survived the war were then given posts in the post-war military structure of the Soviet Union. Their memoirs did not emerge until many German officers had already written their accounts and, crucially, those German accounts had been translated into English. The memoirs of officers like Konev, Zhukov, Vasilevsky etc took far longer to make the transition into English, and by then the German narrative was firmly established. But there were two bigger problems with the Soviet memoirs.

Firstly, they conformed to Soviet orthodoxy, and were widely regarded in the West as being distorted. Secondly, this orthodoxy was from a state that was widely regarded in the West as the enemy. As a consequence, the English-language narrative of the Eastern Front was dominated by the German perspective. As former Wehrmacht officers rose through the ranks of the Bundeswehr and began to influence NATO thinking – and many former Wehrmacht generals took part in training exercises with NATO officers, where they

**"MANY FORMER WEHRMACHT GENERALS TOOK PART IN TRAINING EXERCISES WITH NATO OFFICERS, WHERE THEY REPEATEDLY EMPHASISED SOVIET RELIANCE ON WEIGHT OF NUMBERS OVER SKILL"**

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*Soviet infantry with bayonets fixed march through Red Square*

repeatedly emphasised Soviet reliance on weight of numbers over skill – the pattern solidified. The Red Army, and its successor the Soviet Army, was an inflexible colossus, and this massive over-reliance on sheer weight of numbers could be used against it.

As with many issues the degree to which the Red Army functioned as a huge steamroller contains both truths and falsehoods. The expression 'Russian steamroller' was actually coined in the years before the First World War, when it was widely expected that, once it had fully mobilised, the Russian Army would advance inexorably across Eastern Europe. During the years that followed the Russian Revolution and the Russian Civil War, Soviet military doctrine actually underwent profound changes. More academic papers on mechanised warfare appeared in the Soviet Union than in any country other than Germany, and the principles that the Red Army would attempt to put into effect in the Second World War were first formulated. Writers like Tukhashevsky described the importance of

mobile operations extending through the entire depth of the enemy's positions and in many respects the Soviet Union showed more vision about future warfare than many other nations. All of this came to an abrupt halt with Stalin's purges of the Red Army – Tukachevsky was the first prominent officer to be executed, and visionary thinking was replaced with an increasingly rigid requirement for officers to show political reliability and loyalty. However the principles that Tukhashevsky and others had developed remained in place. The most important question – how well these principles would actually work in a real war – was largely forgotten in the turmoil of the purges.

Even during this period the Red Army developed an attitude to internal analysis that was considerably in advance of other nations. In the winter of 1939-1940 the Soviet Union was embroiled in a painful war with Finland. The expectation in Moscow had been that the Finns would swiftly be defeated, but the conflict revealed huge problems with the Red Army. The setbacks were studied in detail

and recommendations for improvements were drawn up; these recommendations, many of which were valid but often failed to address more fundamental underlying problems, had only partially been implemented by the summer of 1941 when war broke out with Germany.

If the war with Finland was an unpleasant shock, the German invasion of the Soviet Union was a catastrophic blow. The Red Army proved to be deficient in almost every respect. The overall doctrine of operations in depth might be correct, but almost everything else – command structures, training, communications equipment, weaponry – were inadequate. Losses in the opening months of the war were enormous and it seemed to many, both in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, that German victory was only a matter of time. But the reality was different. Despite its losses and inadequacies the Red Army was fighting tenaciously. German losses were high, Soviet resources were far greater than Hitler had expected and the officers and men of the Red Army began to learn how to fight a modern war



*Red army infantry attacking German positions on the southwestern front, using tanks for cover*

Image Getty

in the most testing of conditions. By the end of 1941 a precious breathing space had been won and the Red Army began a painful process of evolution. Almost every major operation was analysed and lessons were applied.

Training at every level evolved continually, unit structures were repeatedly refined to improve the balance of forces, equipment was improved and political interference in military decision-making was reduced. The first fruits of this were seen in the Stalingrad encirclement in late 1942, and despite Manstein's remarkable recovery in early 1943, the process of learning from what had worked (and crucially, what had not worked) continued. By the summer of 1943, two years after the beginning of the war, the Red Army was a very different organisation.

In some respects the great Soviet offensives that followed the defeat of the Wehrmacht at Kursk were attempts to replicate the huge success of Stalingrad. The fact that the German armies on either side of the Kursk bulge – particularly to the south, in Ukraine – were able to pull back and avoid encirclement is testament to the continuing skill of the Wehrmacht, but this achievement came at a considerable price. The huge resources of the Soviet Union and the scale of the battlefield ensured that the German front line would give way, and much of the German retreat to the Dnepr was marked by desperate counterthrusts by panzer formations to prevent Soviet units

from exploiting the breaches that inevitably appeared. But if encirclement and destruction of major formations was avoided, the success came at a great price.

With the Wehrmacht now forced onto the defensive, weaknesses in German forces' structures became increasingly apparent. In particular the relative immobility of German infantry formations, and their weakness in terms of anti-tank firepower, was ruthlessly exposed, and the panzer divisions of Manstein's Army Group South were in almost constant action, both supporting the infantry divisions in defensive positions and mounting counterattacks. There was little opportunity for rest or recuperation, and by the time that the Wehrmacht reached the Dnepr, few panzer divisions had more than 20 tanks.

The continuation of operations through the autumn rainy season and into winter, with no significant pause, placed a huge strain on both sides. The sheer scale of the Red Army, and the vast industrial resources of the Soviet Union – aided considerably by a steady stream of military aid from the West – allowed the Soviet forces to prevail. Manstein was left to reflect ruefully that the Red Army was like a hydra: if his units cut off a head, several more would grow in its place. But the heads of the hydra were not simply functioning as a mindless horde.

The Red Army of late 1943 was a far more skilful opponent than the lumbering giant of 1941. In previous years there had been a widespread view that the better trained and more skilful German units were more than a match for their Soviet equivalents, but as 1944 began, this was no longer always true.

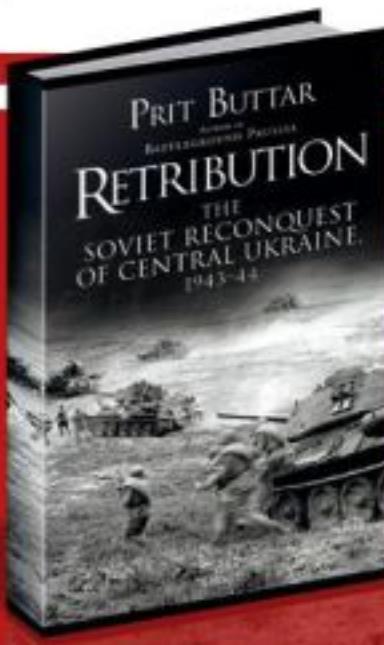
The loss of so many experienced officers, the lack of adequate replacement drafts, shortages of equipment and spare parts, and a steady worsening of fuel shortages had greatly reduced the efficacy of the Wehrmacht. On the other side of the front line, losses had been enormous, and even in 1943 Soviet losses consistently

soared above German losses, but equipped with improved tanks and guns, and led by a group of experienced and tested officers who had emerged from the crucible, the Red Army was a far more formidable opponent. The process of evolution would continue right to the end of the war, but 1944 would see many factors combine to give the Red Army a series of victories that ensured the final defeat of Germany.

Over recent years the previously established narrative of the Eastern Front has been steadily re-evaluated. Access to Soviet-era documentation has been of great value, and writers like David Glantz have used this material to outstanding effect in rewriting the history of the Soviet-German conflict. There can be no doubt that numbers played a great part in Soviet military thinking – this was inevitable given the sheer scale of the conflict. Training an army as vast as the Red Army posed huge challenges and changing that training during a conflict made these challenges even tougher.

The casualties suffered by Soviet units, particularly infantry, resulted in formations receiving replacement drafts – often recruited in areas that had only recently been liberated – that had poor levels of training, and the later months of the war saw many units using these relatively poorly trained men in 'human wave' attacks, but there was also another underlying story: the evolution of the Red Army into a formidable, war-winning machine.

Prit Buttar studied medicine at Oxford and London before joining the British Army as a doctor. An established expert on the Eastern Front in 20th century military history, Buttar's previous books include the critically acclaimed *Battleground Prussia: The Assault On Germany's Eastern Front 1944-45* (Osprey 2010), *Between Giants: The Battle For The Baltics In World War II* (Osprey 2013) and a definitive four-part series on the Eastern Front in World War I.

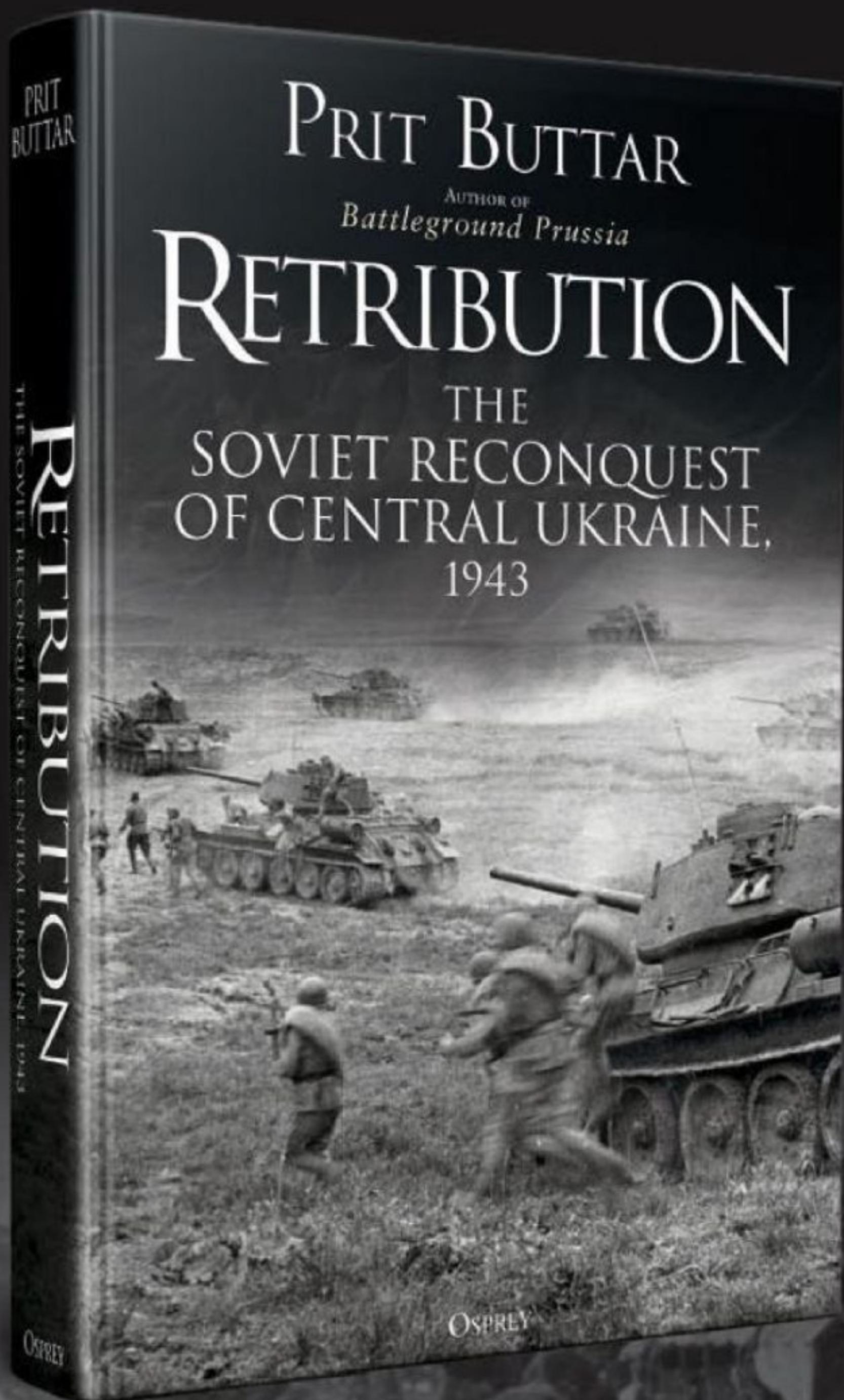


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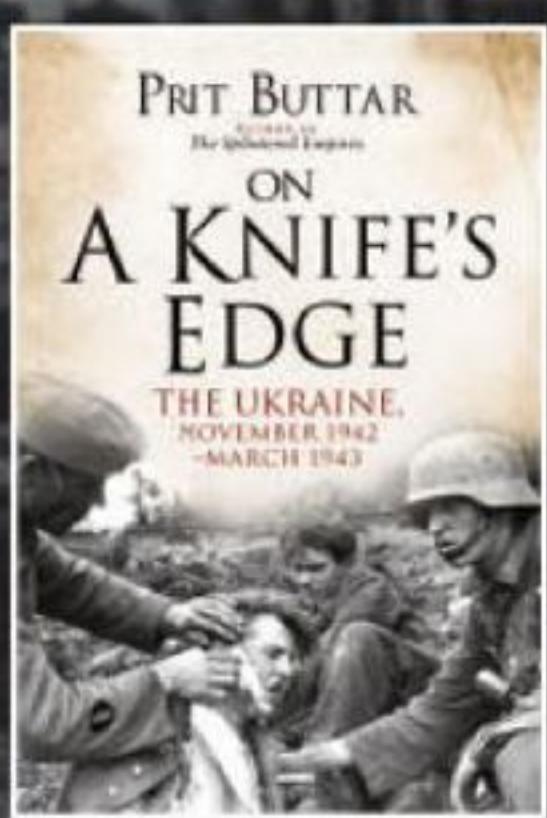
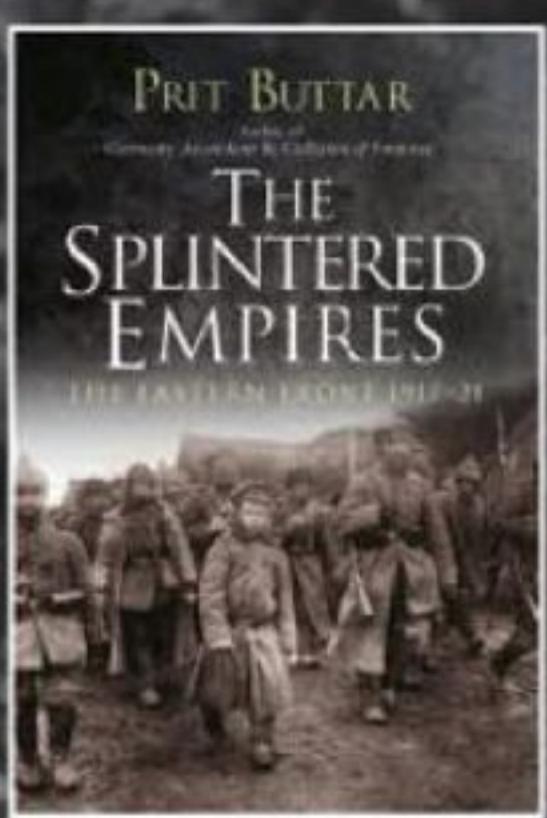
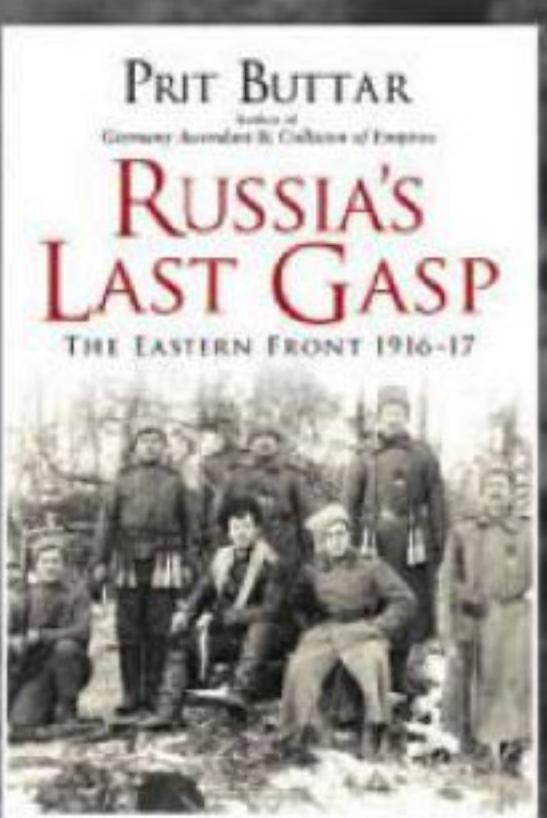
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# DEFENDING THE FALKLANDS

PART III

# INVASION

In the concluding part of their series, Michael Jones and Mike Norman recall the brief and desperate battle to repel the Argentinean offensive



WORDS MICHAEL JONES

**I**t was 2.00am on 2 April 1982. The night was calm and clear. The Royal Marines of Naval Party 8901 – the Falklands' garrison – had moved out of their barracks at Moody Brook and taken up positions to resist an expected Argentinian invasion. That operation was codenamed Operation Rosary. The Argentine fleet, commanded by Rear Admiral Carlos Busser, had set sail on 28 March. "We felt we were taking part in a historic action," Busser said proudly. Bad weather had delayed their approach but the majority of these ships were now bearing down upon Cape Pembroke and Mengeary Point – which marked the outer approaches to Stanley. Here they would be within striking distance of the beaches to the east of the Falkland Islands' capital.

Opposing them were 69 Royal Marines. "Our men were driving off into the darkness and I knew that I might never see them again,"

Corporal Geordie Gill recalled. "The Argies were coming with warships and probably a massive force of artillery, air and armour – and we were on our own. I always knew, from every other conflict that I had been in, that there was a chance I could get killed or injured. This time though, it wasn't a matter of chance: we knew it was going to be us."

There is a terrible loneliness in the last few hours before combat and the Marines were particularly alone that night. Communications with Whitehall were at first intermittent – as atmospheric conditions disrupted the radio link, managed by Cable and Wireless, with the United Kingdom – and then ceased altogether at 4.45am (Falklands Time). Governor Rex Hunt's reports of the invasion would go unheard.

"We had had a signal from Whitehall telling us to 'make our dispositions accordingly', in other words to fight until we were overrun," Geordie Gill continued. "Our government had

not even wished us 'good luck!'. I thought to myself that Nelson would have done it better."

## Overwhelming odds

To a large extent, we can now reconstruct the main Argentine military plan, their Order of Battle, and the units readying themselves for action. Early on 2 April Major Mike Norman, the commander of the small Falklands' garrison, had no idea how many men he would be facing or where they would be coming from. He was hampered by poor intelligence: the Ministry of Defence had not taken into account the possibility of Argentine Special Forces operations and was unaware that their military possessed American armoured tracked amphibious vehicles – Amtracks. However instinct told him that the Argentinians would want to take the Falklands quickly and to do so, would come ashore in considerable strength.

Soldiers of the Argentine army photographed in 1982



Major Norman anticipated a landing of several thousand men, with armoured vehicles, helicopters and air support. To face them, Norman and Major Gary Noott had 67 Marines (including administrative personnel) and ten Naval Hydrographers (most of whom had never handled a rifle before, let alone used it). Thirty-two brave men of the Falkland Islands Defence Force had also turned out that night, but Mike Norman had no command or control of this force whatsoever. The most powerful armaments he possessed were one mortar – of little use in a fluid combat situation – and two Carl Gustav anti-tank weapons, with an effective range against a moving target of around 400 metres. It was desperate.

There were two beaches at Yorke Bay, east of Stanley, suitable for a landing, and Major Norman set up a rolling system of defence, in six-man sections, covering these and the Airfield. An ops room and small garrison was put in Government House and another section posted on Murray Heights to the south, in case the Argentines made a landing from this direction. Marine Berry manned a lone look-out post on Sapper Hill and Norman placed his own Tac HQ at Lookout Rocks, just east of Stanley.

Here Mike Norman and Lieutenant Bill Trollope ran over the plan one last time. Trollope recalled, "We would make contact with the enemy, force him to deploy and meet him with as much force as we could muster. We were hugely outnumbered – but we would not go down easily. We would hold each attack for as long as we could, cause the enemy maximum delay and casualties, before each section pulled back to the Marines in place behind them. As Mike and I talked it over, I recalled the breeze getting stronger. I began shivering – not from the cold, but from the sheer tension of the situation."

Marines Milne and Wilcox formed the thin end of this defensive wedge, on the anticipated landing beach on the eastern side of Yorke Bay. Jock Wilcox remembered, "We found a good position to place the machine-gun, amongst the sand dunes overlooking the sea and took shelter from an increasingly cold wind. Clouds began to cover the moon and the night grew darker. We expected the landing would take place just before dawn.

"It would be a short sharp engagement, opening fire on the enemy as soon as they dropped the ramps of their landing craft. We would hit them as hard as possible before attempting to withdraw to our next line of defence on our motorbikes."

But that defence position was one and a half kilometres away and the Argentine invasion would be fully underway. The two men on the beach faced warships, troops, armour and air cover. "We did not know whether we would make it," Wilcox admitted, "but there was a job to be done and we got on with it."

### First contact

Major Norman instructed the chartered cargo ship MV Forrest to put to sea. At 2.30am its courageous master, 67-year-old Jack Sollis (one of the Falkland Islands' most skilful mariners) reported two contacts, both ships sailing towards Stanley without lights. They were about five miles off Mengeary Point. The waiting would not go on much longer. The night was exceptionally quiet and at around 4.30am Mike Norman briefly heard the sound of what he thought was helicopters, from the south, in the direction of Port Harriet. And then, shortly before 5.00am, Jack Sollis confirmed the earlier contacts and reported three more. There were now five ships bearing down on Stanley.

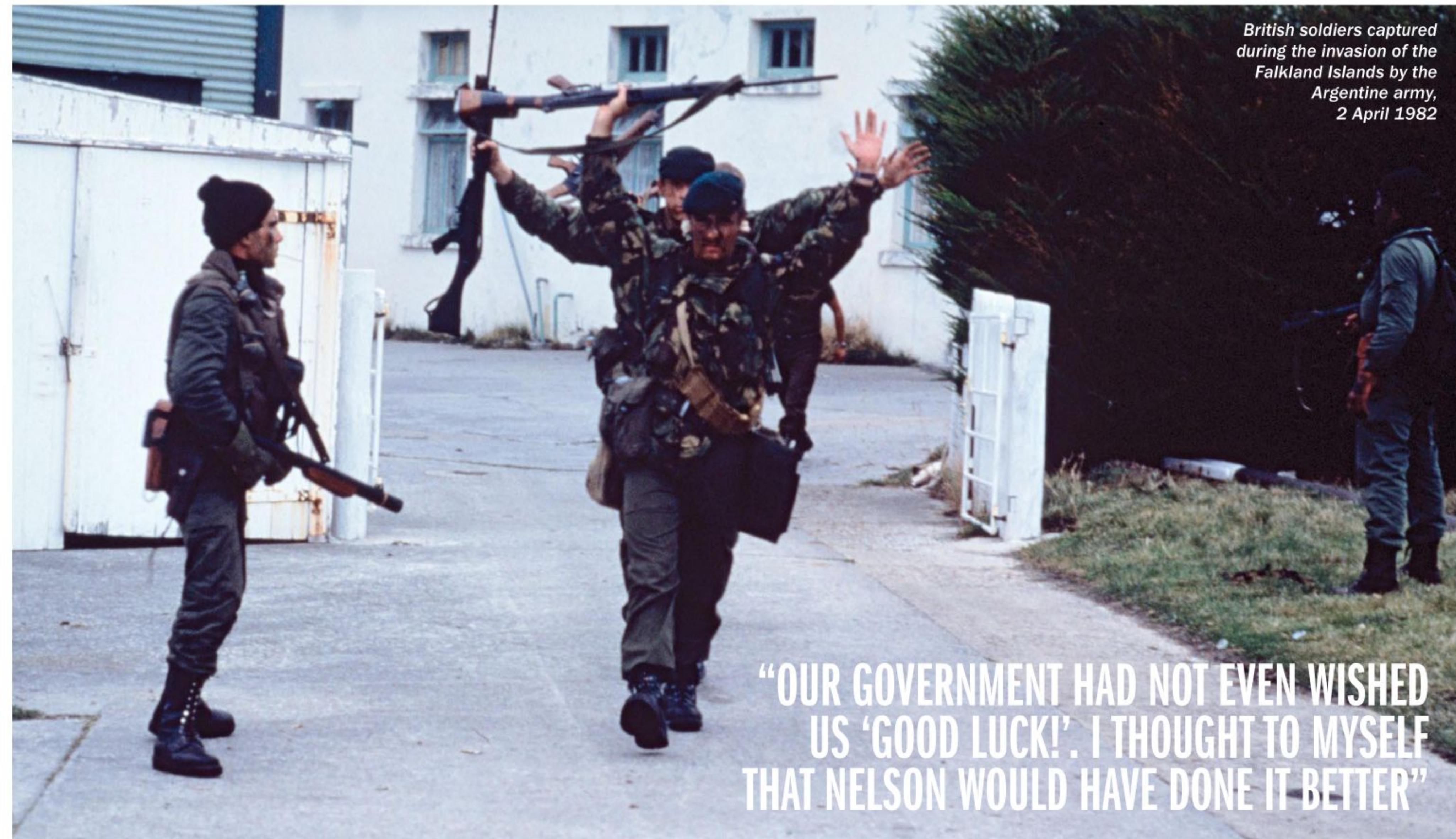
It was simply too dangerous for the unarmed Forrest to remain in position, so Norman recalled Sollis and his small crew. But at 5.45am the lighthouse keeper at Cape Pembroke reported further ship movement, prompting Governor Rex Hunt to send 'The invasion has started' signal to Whitehall. It was never received. All communications were now down and would remain so throughout the duration of the invasion.

Major Norman's attention was mostly focussed towards the east. But unknown to him, the Argentine destroyer Santísima Trinidad had broken off from the main invasion fleet, and was steaming south of Stanley carrying 21 Gemini assault craft. The Argentinian Special Forces were preparing for action. Two groups put ashore – one would attack the Royal Marines barracks at Moody Brook, the other was heading straight for Government House. "At 6.05am there was a fantastic amount of automatic fire and explosions from the Brook," Norman recalled. "Fortunately the barracks was empty, but it was clear what their next target would be."

Norman raced back to Government House, and as he did so all hell broke loose. It was 6.15am. The Argentine invasion had begun.

### Defending Government House

The Argentinians attacked with about 40 men, joined by another 50 from Moody Brook. Their operation was well-planned and co-ordinated. They wanted to neutralise the Falklands garrison and capture the governor in advance of their main landing. Government House was a cluster of wooden extensions surrounding the original building. The Argentines occupied the ridge above it and then came down fast. They had silencers on their submachine guns and were using stun grenades.



## DEFENDING THE FALKLANDS

There were about 30 Royal Marines in the building. Corporal Geordie Gill was in the sniper section, in the Annexe on the left-hand side of house. "The whole structure was shaking," Gill remembered. "Some of it was completely wrecked and all the windows were shot out. They got in very close." But Geordie Gill and his fellow Marines struck back hard.

"I felt it was something worth fighting for," Gill emphasised, "and I am sure that the rest of the lads did too. It was our flag which was flying, the islanders wanted to stay British and we were the only ones there to stop the Argies."

Gill's determination was evident from the Action Report he later wrote, "I engaged the Argentine section commander on the ridge at 500 metres with my L42 [a Royal Marine sniper rifle], and on my third shot he dropped his weapon, jerked upright and slid over the rock he was using as cover, falling in full view of us, where he remained unmoving. I then shot the rifleman, who slumped behind the rock – leaving his rifle on top of it ... We were then engaged by a machine-gunner. I fired four shots at him and after the last he did not return fire."

The attack on Government House was beaten off. Mike Norman pulled some of his sections back to reinforce the defenders. But now the main Argentine landing was taking place. Their Amtracks had allowed them to use a shallow, undefended beach. The remaining Royal Marines resolved to make a stand at White City, instead, on the outskirts of Stanley.

### The clash at White City

It was 7.15am and dawn was beginning to break. The Marines got into position, taking cover amidst the tussock grass. At least 14 Argentine amphibious vehicles appeared at the end of the road. More were on their way. "As the Amtracks came towards us I saw men shaking hands," Marine Danny Betts recalled. "I think we all felt 'this is it'!"

"Six armoured personnel carriers, each carrying between ten and twenty Argentine troops, began advancing towards us at speed," Lieutenant Trollope wrote in his Action Report. "Marine Buster Brown was No1 on the 84mm. As the lead vehicle approached, I told him to fire when ready. This would be the signal for us all to open up."

The Marines had not had time to zero-in all their weapons. The first shot was 100 metres short. The second got much closer to the Amtrack – the men were finding their range. The vehicle accelerated towards their position. Marine Mark Gibbs, manning a 66mm, struck the vehicle on its side. "It swung round," Gibbs said, "directly facing us. It was less than 500 metres away. 'Let's get it!' Brown shouted,

Royal Marines raise the Union flag again at Government House in Port Stanley after the surrender of the Argentine forces



fired and hit. The round exploded right on the Amtrack's front. There was a flash and thick black smoke billowed from it. Nobody got out."

The remaining armoured carriers halted, deployed their troops and then opened fire. The Marines engaged them with machine-guns and rifles – and continued fighting all the way back into Stanley."

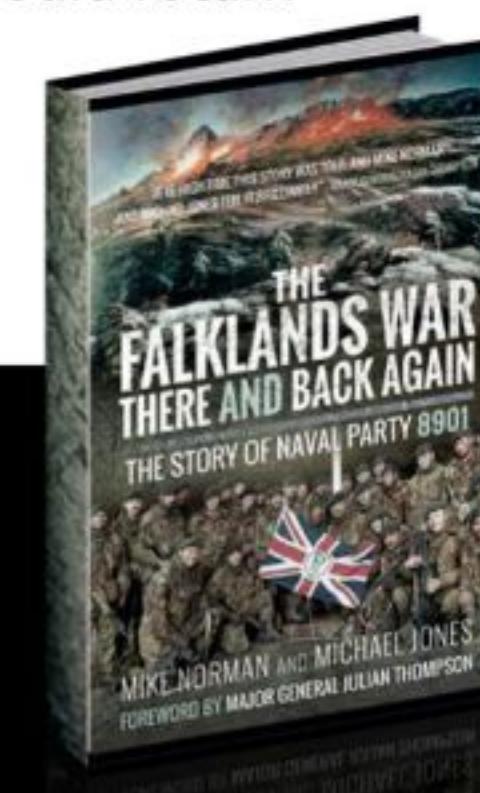
### "We will be back"

It was now after 8.45am. Some Marines had reached Government House, others were fighting in the streets around it. But more and more Argentine troops were flooding into the Falklands' capital and their Amtracks were following them. Helicopters and ground attack aircraft were appearing. Rex Hunt opened negotiations with the Argentine commander and at 9.25am decided to surrender. The fight for the Falklands was over. The Royal Marines did not want to accept the surrender.

They were prepared to fight to the end. The governor needed to use a different form of words, instructing them to 'lay down their arms' instead. The difference was all-important for Stanley's defenders. Theirs was a battle fought with extraordinary courage and professionalism. "We will be back," Major Norman told an Argentine officer. And it remained 'unfinished business' for the Marines of Naval Party 8901. They would return with the Task Force and on 16 June 1982 hoisted the Falklands' flag once more over Government House.

### FURTHER READING

Mike Norman and Michael Jones, *The Falklands War – There And Back Again: The Story Of Naval Party 8901* (Barnsley, 2019)



Images: Getty, TopFoto

**"WE WILL BE BACK," MAJOR NORMAN TOLD AN ARGENTINE OFFICER. AND IT REMAINED 'UNFINISHED BUSINESS' FOR THE MARINES OF NAVAL PARTY 8901"**

# FREQUENT VISITS TO THE BATHROOM?

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# MUSEUMS & EVENTS

Discover Sandhurst's revamped memorial, Glasgow's tribute to its wartime volunteers and Dorset's mighty regimental museum



## SANDHURST'S ASIAN COMMEMORATION

**Britain's officer training academy has revamped its Indian Army Memorial Room in conjunction with the National Army Museum**

The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst is the British Army's initial officer training centre. With its stated aim of being "the national centre of excellence for leadership" Sandhurst has been training officers in its current form since 1947 but has a rich lineage that goes back to 1741.

Since 1950 the Indian Army Memorial Room (IAMR) has been a focal point for Sandhurst cadets, upon both arrival and commission. The significance of the shared history between Britain and South Asia remains of great importance to their training, as well as to their understanding of the British Army's role today.

The IAMR was initially dedicated as a museum to preserve the history of the British Indian Army and a selection of objects and paintings from its original collection formed the foundation for the National Army Museum (NAM), which was established in 1960. The NAM has now returned to its roots and has reinvigorated the IAMR with unseen items from its collection, some of which were shown in the room for the first time almost 70 years ago.

The recent additions to the room are a series of 57 portraits and scenes that hang above new display cases filled with ceramics, silverware and regimental badges. Four pieces of stained glass have been conserved from the NAM

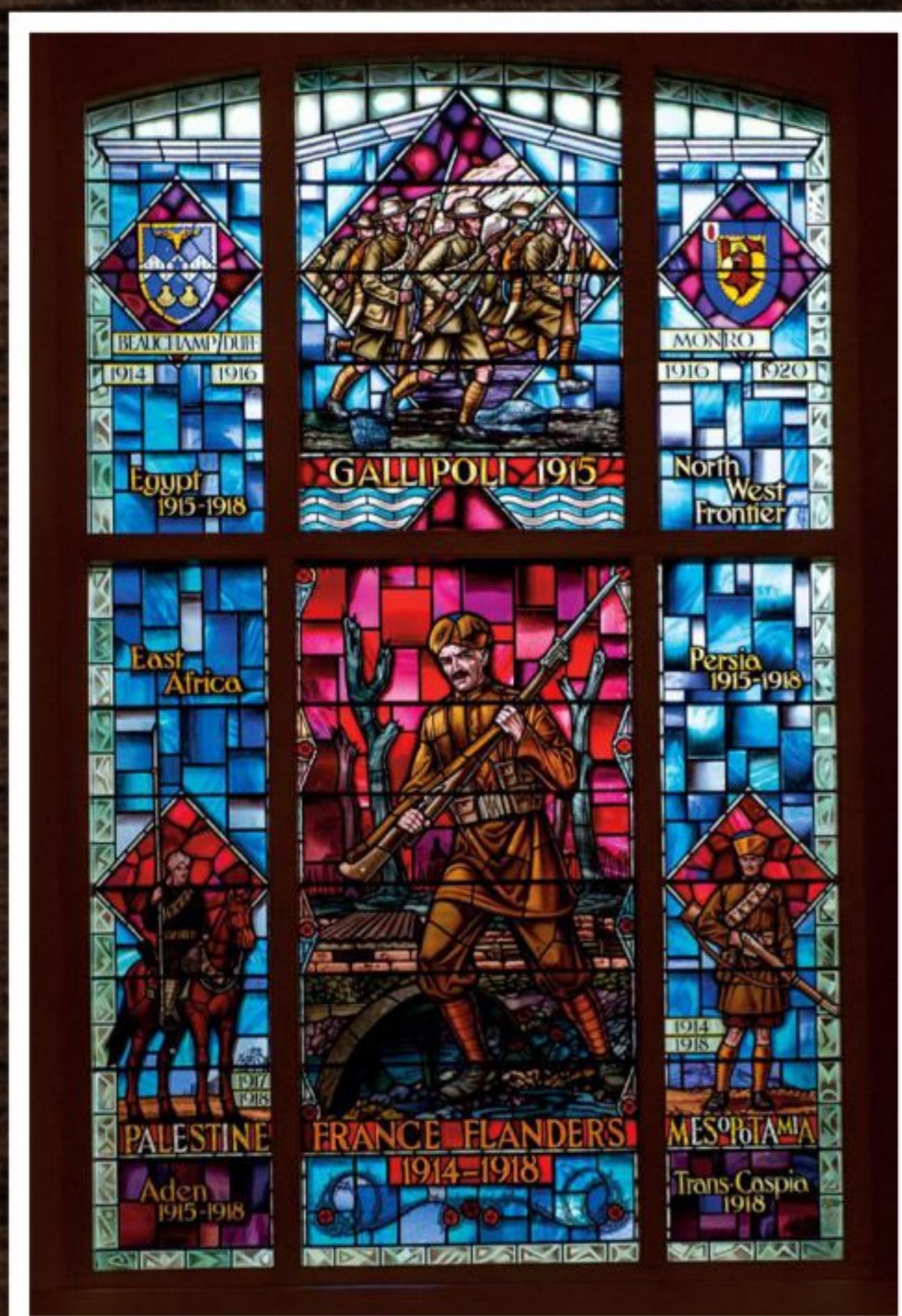
collection and installed with over 40 shields of the commanders-in-chief in India. There are also memorial plaques, busts and swords.

Director of the NAM, Brigadier (Retd.) Justin Maciejewski DSO, MBE says, "We are delighted to be able to display more of our collection in this historic setting, especially objects of such beauty and significance in terms of the shared heritage between Britain and the nations of South Asia. These objects and the inspiring stories that they represent show the extraordinary diversity of the British Indian Army."

The Commandant of Sandhurst, Major General Paul Nanson CBE, also says, "A major part of developing the future leaders of the British Army involves looking to the powerful lessons of our forebears. The inspiration to cadets of all nations provided by the leadership, courage and spirit of the great regiments of the British Indian Army is as strong today as ever. This room serves as a fitting memorial to over 200 years of service and sacrifice."

The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst is accessible to members of the public on Heritage Day and throughout the year via bookings through the Sandhurst Trust.

Stained glass windows adorn the IAMR, including this example that pays tribute to the South Asian soldiers who fought in the Middle East Campaigns of WWI



FOR INFORMATION AND OPENING TIMES PLEASE VISIT: [WWW.SANDHURSTTRUST.ORG](http://WWW.SANDHURSTTRUST.ORG)



Images: Royal Voluntary Service

## GLASGOW'S WARTIME HEROES

**Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum is hosting an exhibition to celebrate the city's civilian volunteers**

The Royal Voluntary Service is one of the largest voluntary service organisations in the UK. Around 20,000 volunteers give their skills, experience and time to help people in need in hospitals, at home and in the community. It was originally set up as the Women's Voluntary Services (WVS) in 1938 to help civilians, particularly after WWII broke out.

From 3 October 2019 to 31 January 2020, Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in Glasgow is hosting an exhibition called 'Compassion in Crisis'. This chronicles eight decades of Royal Voluntary Service in the city from WWII to the 'Facebook generation'.

Between 1939-45, the WVS supported the Home Front by helping civilians during air raids and collecting, salvaging and distributing ration

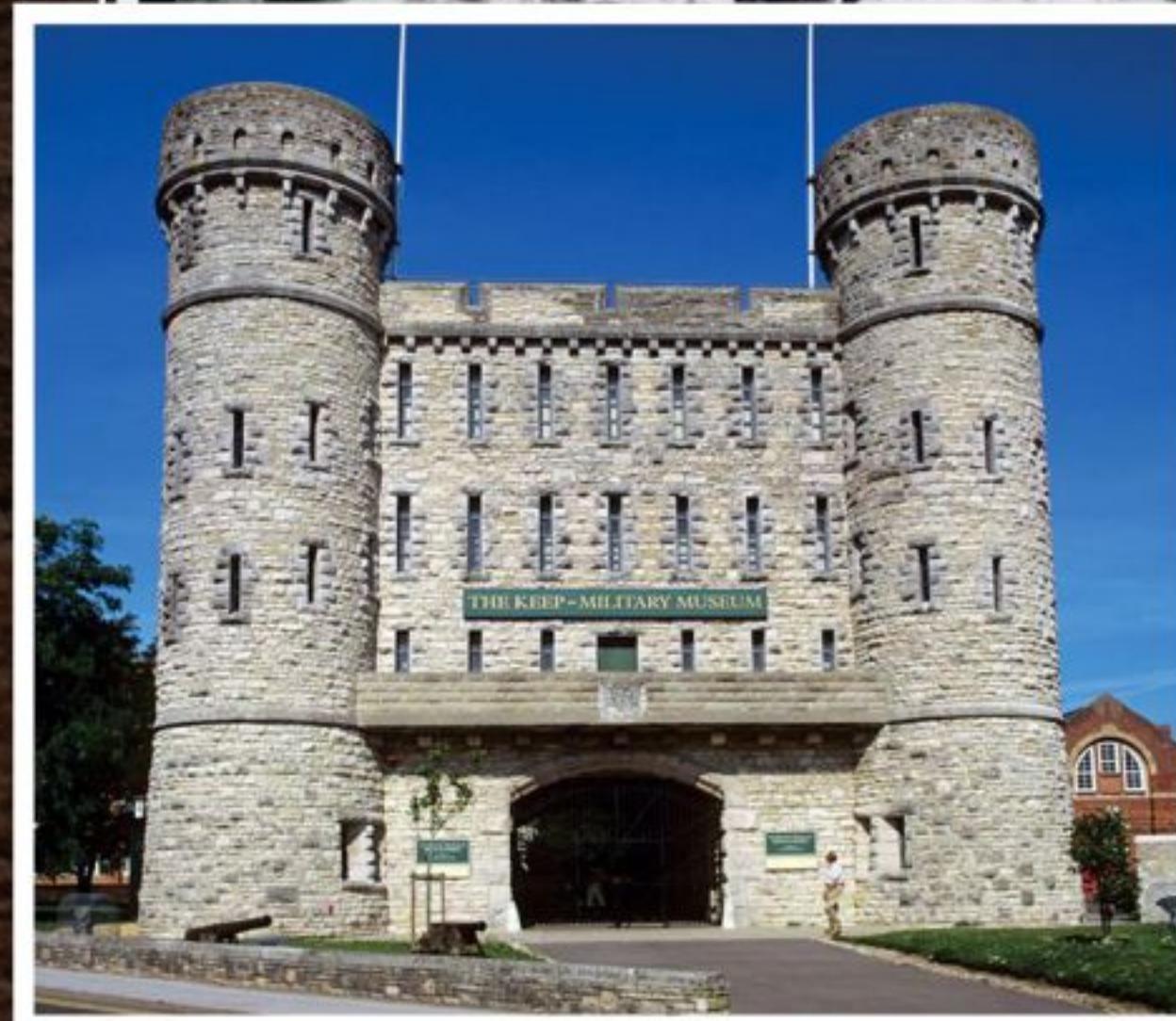
books. In later years, the volunteers supported the emergency services during the Lockerbie disaster. They continue to run lunch and social clubs as well as extensively supporting the NHS.

The exhibition tells the Royal Voluntary Service's story through a collection of documents, photographs, objects and film. Jennifer Hunt, archivist of the RVS Heritage Collection says, "We are delighted to share these stories of true voluntary service in this exhibition; raising awareness and giving recognition to thousands of volunteers who have gifted their skills and energy to helping others for over 80 years."

**FOR MORE INFORMATION: [WWW.GLASGOWMUSEUMS.COM](http://WWW.GLASGOWMUSEUMS.COM)**



A soldier of the Dorset Regiment fires a machine-gun while battling through a French village during WWII



Left: The Keep offers fantastic panoramic views over Dorchester and the surrounding Dorset countryside

## THE KEEP

**Dorset's military history is housed in a distinctive 19th century building that was designed to look like a medieval fortress**

Dorchester is Dorset's county town and most famous for its close connections with the novelist and poet Thomas Hardy. However, in his lifetime, a building was constructed that would become the county's regimental museum. 'The Keep' was completed in 1879 to serve as the gatehouse as part of a Depot Barracks. It was built in time for the amalgamation in 1881 of the 39th and 54th Regiments of Foot into the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Dorsetshire Regiment. Designed to realistically resemble a Norman Castle and built of Portland stone, the Keep served as the regiment's barracks until 1958.

Today the Grade II listed building serves as the Keep Military Museum and is owned by the Ministry of Defence. It tells the story not just of the Dorsetshire (later Dorset) Regiment but other affiliated county units such as the Queen's Own Dorset Yeomanry and Dorset Militia.

The museum's displays cover four floors and 300 years of military history. Its collection is highly varied and even includes Adolf Hitler's desk, which was discovered in his Chancellery office after the fall of Berlin in 1945. There is also a recreation of a WWI trench and 'Tommy Trails' for children to help them understand the life of British soldiers during the World Wars. Visitors can additionally see interactive displays and as well as exhibits of medals, uniforms and weapons.

**FOR MORE VISIT: [WWW.KEEPMILITARYMUSEUM.ORG](http://WWW.KEEPMILITARYMUSEUM.ORG)**

Images: Alamy

# LIBERATORS

This year the Netherlands commemorates its liberation from Nazi occupation, paying tribute to the Allied forces who fought and died for Dutch freedom

In the Autumn of 1944, after their successful breakout from the beachheads in Normandy and with German forces making a fighting retreat east, the Allied armies continued their advance, liberating villages, towns and cities. However their progress was far from smooth – the Germans proved tenacious in their defence, digging into strong positions in a bid to slow and halt their enemy. After the failure of Operation Market Garden, SHAEF turned its attention to Antwerp, the huge port city that would be essential in shortening already stretched supply lines. Though the Dutch hoped their liberation had been delivered in the swift

strike from the air, it would now have to be achieved through a long, attritional campaign.

The largest of the battles to open the shipping lanes was the Battle of the Scheldt, named after the river which ends at the port of Antwerp. After weeks of intense fighting, British, American, Canadian and Polish troops were able to push the German defenders across the estuary by the end of October 1944 – however the task was only half finished. The province of Zeeland remained in enemy hands, meaning the Germans would be able to fire on any shipping moving into Antwerp. Intense shelling of the area preceded amphibious

landings across the estuary and from the sea. The Allies landed to find huge swathes of the region flooded – on 2 October Allied bombers had destroyed several dykes on the island of Walcheren in an attempt to disrupt the German supply lines. Within days, the region was liberated.

Starting in August 2019 the Netherlands began commemorations for the 75th anniversary of its liberation by Allied forces. Museums, memorials and cemeteries across the country mark the places where Allied soldiers fought and died to help free the country from occupation.

Visitors to the Netherlands will be able to discover the story of the Poles at Driel and Breda, the desperate fight of the 1st Airborne Division at Oosterbeek, the brave resistance networks in Zeeland and more.

## THE AIRBORNE MUSEUM HARTENSTEIN, OOSTERBECK

As the former headquarters of Major-General Roy Urquhart and the 1st Airborne Division during the Battle of Arnhem, this is perhaps one of the most unique museums in Europe and welcomes thousands of visitors every year. As well as recounting the story of the September operation through film and photography the permanent exhibition also contains original uniforms and weapons as well as unique objects such as Lieutenant Colonel Frost's hunting horn and Major-General Urquhart's binoculars.

A recent outdoor exhibition paid tribute to living veterans of Operation Market Garden, commemorating the 75th anniversary of the battle. Between August and September 2019 'Arnhem Boys' told the stories of 28 veterans through portrait photographs and testimonies.

Visitors can also learn about the Dutch Resistance network and also the immersive 'Airborne Experience'. The Airborne Museum will be closed from 28 October 2019 to 14 March 2020 for some renovations.

[www.airbornemuseum.nl](http://www.airbornemuseum.nl)



Image: Airborne Museum Voorzijde



## THE LIBERATION MUSEUM ZEELAND

With prominent exhibits recounting the Battle of the Scheldt and activities of the Dutch Resistance, the museum is also home to a restored Buffalo LTV – these huge vehicles were instrumental in enabling the Allies to cross the Scheldt during the fight to open to Antwerp estuary and liberate Zeeland. Outside is a Bailey bridge, a concrete bunker previously used to house anti-air crew, anti-tank defences and Sherman tanks.

Also on the grounds of the museum is the Emergency Church of Ellewoutsdijk. During intense shelling in October 1944 German soldiers used the tower of the nearby village church as a lookout – meaning it soon became the target for Allied shells, which destroyed the church and much of the surrounding buildings. Luckily the residents of Ellewoutsdijk had already evacuated to safety, and upon their return a temporary church was rebuilt using two Nissen huts. Now the church has been restored and preserved, and is regularly used for worship, commemorative services and the occasional wedding!

[www.bevrijdingsmuseumzeeland.nl](http://www.bevrijdingsmuseumzeeland.nl)

Images: Liberation Museum Zeeland



## POLISH MILITARY FIELD OF HONOR BREDA, NORTH BRABANT

THE FINAL RESTING PLACE OF POLISH SOLDIERS INVOLVED IN THE LIBERATION, THIS SITE IS ALSO THE NEW HOME OF THE GENERAL MACZEK MUSEUM

By the end of October 1944 the city of Breda was among the last cities to be liberated during the Battle of the Scheldt, taken from the Germans by the 1st Polish Armoured Division. The city escaped serious damage thanks to the Poles' manoeuvres to outflank the enemy, taking the city with far fewer civilian casualties than expected.

After his death in 1994, aged 102, General Stanislaw Maczek, commander of the 1st Polish Armoured Division, was buried in this cemetery alongside his men in accordance with his final wishes. As of 2019 the site is undergoing renovation with construction underway for a permanent memorial and the new home of the General Maczek Museum dedicated to the Poles and their role in the liberation of Breda. [www.maczemuseum.nl/en](http://www.maczemuseum.nl/en) and [www.brabantremembers.com](http://www.brabantremembers.com)

## THE POLES OF DRIEL DRIEL, OVERBETUWE

IN THE FALLOUT OF THE FAILED OPERATION MARKET GARDEN, POLISH TROOPS FOUGHT HARD TO HOLD THE LINE AND KEEP A ROUTE OF RETREAT OPEN TO THE ALLIES IN OOSTERBEEK

On the night of 21 September over 1,000 troops of the 1st Independent Polish Parachute Brigade dropped near the village of Driel, on the south bank of the River Waal. Around 500 more paratroopers were forced to abort their landing due to poor weather, but nonetheless their comrades were able to overwhelm the enemy occupying the village and set about making contact with the British across the river at Oosterbeek.

Night after night the Poles conducted daring crossings on makeshift rafts and dinghies to link up with the battling Paratroopers in Oosterbeek, however their mission soon turned into a desperate fight to ferry retreating troops back south across the Waal. The Germans targeted the Poles in Driel with machine-gun and shellfire, as Sosabowski's men fought to defend these river crossings, as well as the field hospital that had been set up in the village. On the morning of 26 September the Brigade was forced



to give up its position in Driel and retreat towards Nijmegen. In the aftermath of the operation General Sosabowski was blamed by the British and relieved of his command. Opened in 2014 the Poles of Driel Information Centre now pays tribute to the 1st Polish Parachute Brigade and also presents the story of Sosabowski's unfair treatment in the aftermath of Market Garden.

A memorial outside the centre also honours Sosabowski, with a special plaque also dedicated by British paratroopers in 2006. It reads, "The British veterans of Arnhem have raised this memorial to record their enduring admiration for an inspiring commander, a fearless fighter for freedom and a great Polish hero."

[www.driel-polien.nl/en/informatiecentrum](http://www.driel-polien.nl/en/informatiecentrum)

**Liberation  
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## LIBERATION ROUTE EUROPE

Liberation Route Europe is a commemorative project aiming to tell the story of the final months of WWII in Europe. Spanning from south England to Berlin, the interactive map marks major battlefields, as well as lesser known but unique locations, as well as museums, memorials and other key landmarks across the continent.

More info: [www.europeremembers.com](http://www.europeremembers.com) and [www.liberationroute.com](http://www.liberationroute.com)

# HISTORY of WAR REVIEWS

Our pick of the latest military history books and films

## THE KING

A SUBVERSIVE INTERROGATION OF HENRY V'S LIFE AND NATIONAL IMAGE

**Director:** David Michôd **Distributor:** Netflix

**Stars:** Timothée Chalamet, Joel Edgerton, Sean Harris, Robert Pattinson **Released:** 1 November

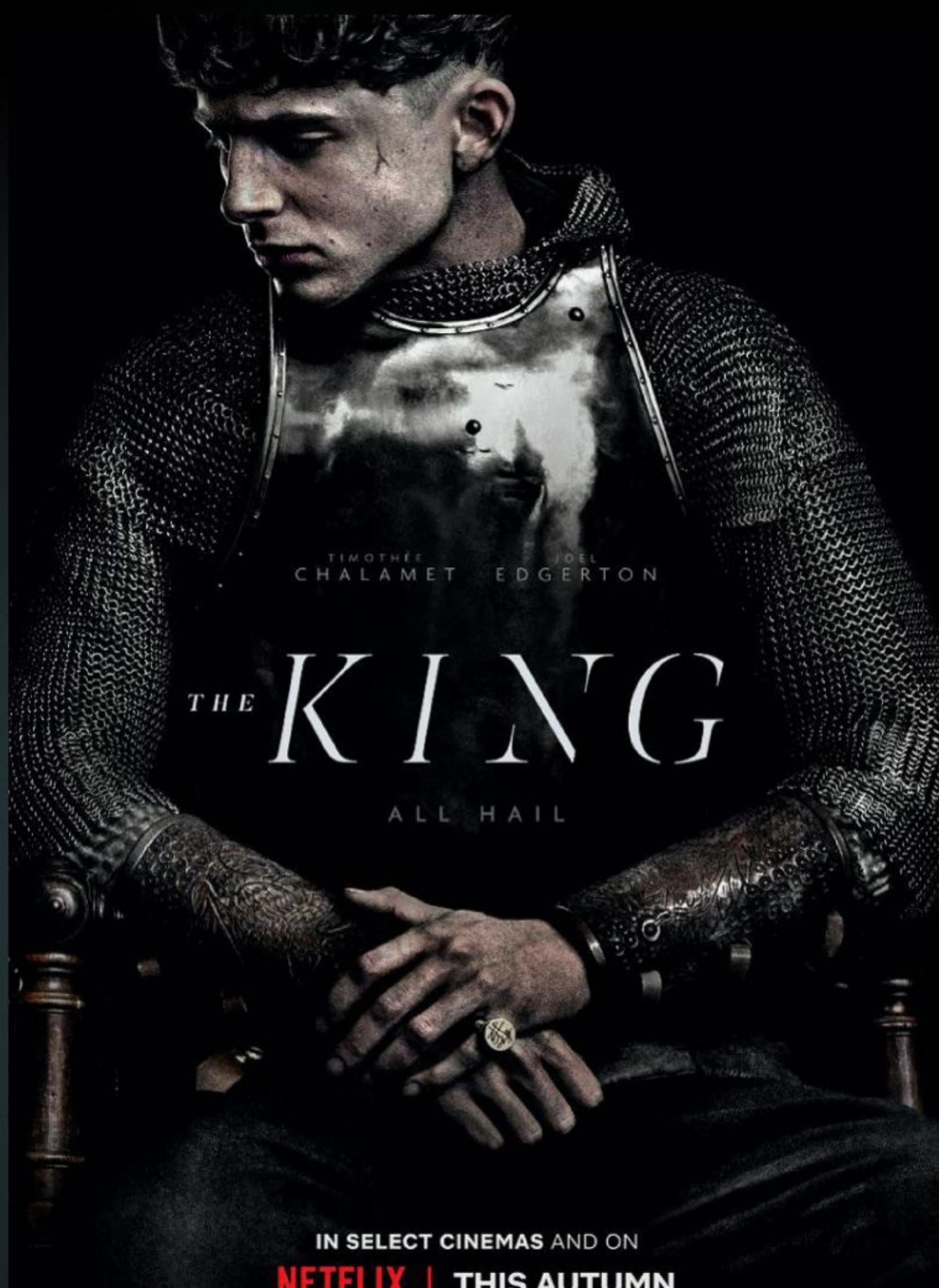
"Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more." Henry V's impassioned command, as written by William Shakespeare, is among the most rousing battle cries ever penned and a staple of previous movies about Henry V made by Laurence Olivier (1944) and Kenneth Branagh (1989), along with the St Crispin's Day speech. But you'll find neither here. Australian filmmaker David Michôd's fresh take on the young king's life and exploits in battle is potently spiked with an emphasis on English warmongering, chicanery and duplicity. This Henry V is a critique of mythology; one done in the guise of a coming-of-age story about a beloved and idealised ultimate-Englishman figure.

A lot of interest in *The King* will be derived from the casting of bright young star Timothée Chalamet as Prince Hal/King Henry and Robert Pattinson as the Dauphin. You can count the scenes in which the actor appears on the one hand (it's more an extended cameo than supporting role), but Pattinson leaves a mighty impression as the bonkers Dauphin thanks to an outrageous Pepé Le Pew accent and plenty of scenery-chewing. The French royal struts around with a cocky swagger yet he disastrously miscalculates his tactical nous as a military leader. He's also a master of Gallic antagonism. "Let us talk in English. I like to talk in English," he jovially claims to Henry, in their brief meeting in the run up to the Battle of Agincourt. Then comes the sting, "It's so simple and ugly."

Pattinson's Dauphin initially smacks of being at total odds with the tone of the film. He doesn't appear until well into the second act, breezing in like he belongs to another production entirely. But it's cleverly devised stuff as the character not only reflects a crass stereotype of English imagination (the king of France is described as a madman and degenerate too) and the French are only ever seen and their motives understood through their rival's eyes.

The meat of the narrative is focused on Henry being sneakily manipulated and manoeuvred into making decisions he believes he's arrived at independently, while the director's thrilling recreation of Agincourt possesses a thunderous, chaotic beauty. An extraordinary sequence edited to maximise claustrophobic interactions between battling soldiers, the terror of close quarters combat on a water-logged field is strikingly choreographed, at times looking like a mosh pit at a rock concert. Michôd plays some shots and moments in slow motion, the blood and mud flying all over the place. The sound design, too, is an engrossing symphony of whooshing arrows, braying horses, clanking metal, squelched earth and agonised screams.

*The King* is a surprisingly subversive piece of work, more in the vein of the 1970s Australian New Wave period than a traditional Shakespearean saga or historic war movie. It portrays England's patriotic fervour and actions as fronts for scheming power grabs. In pulling apart the popular image we have of Henry V and interrogating it Michôd and his co-writer Joel Edgerton have crafted an ingenious deconstruction of national identity. **MC**



# CHASTISE

THE FIRST ACCOUNT OF OPERATION CHASTISE THAT GIVES THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY BEHIND THE DAMBUSTERS LEGEND

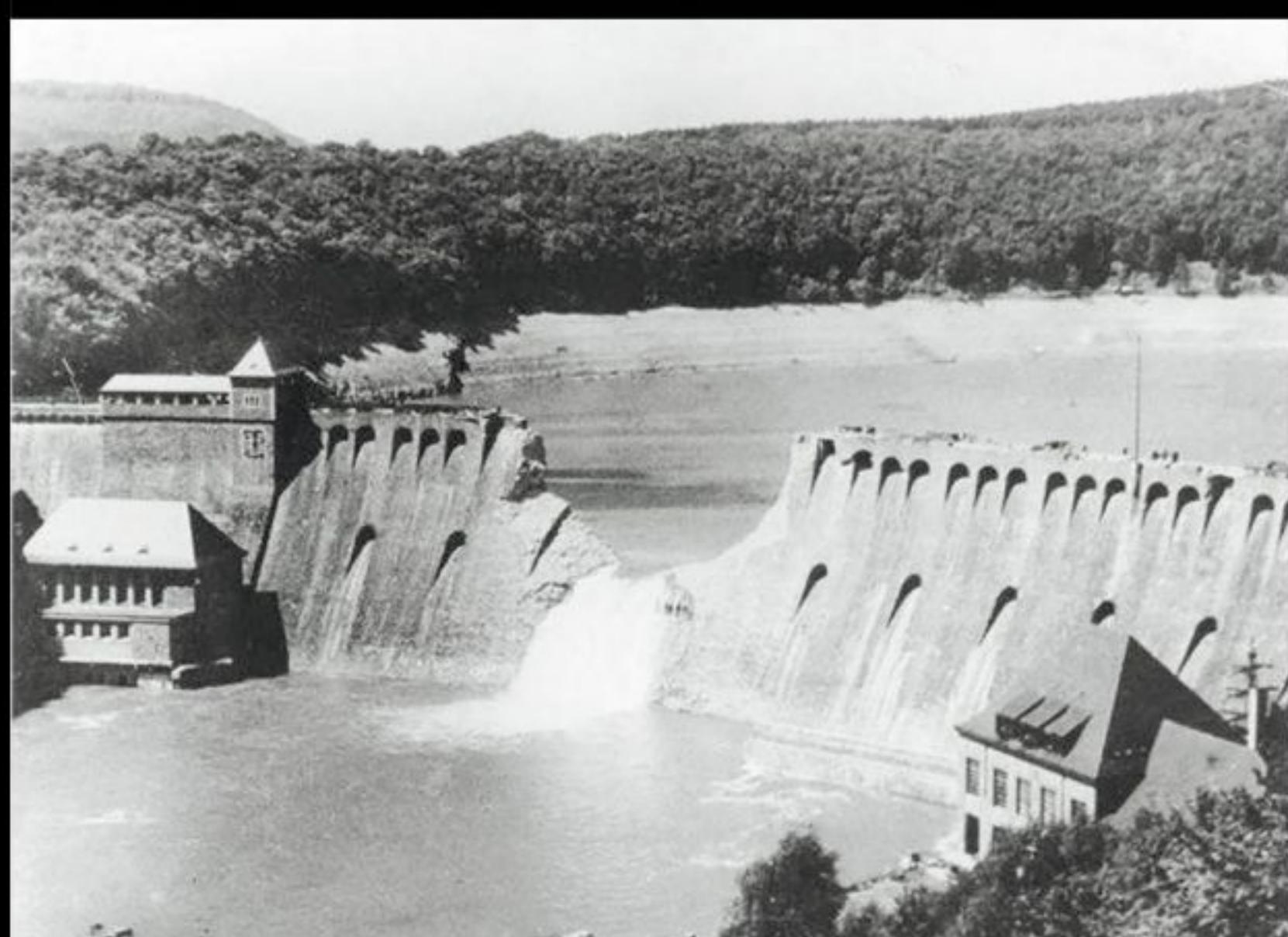
**Author:** Max Hastings **Publisher:** HarperCollins **Price:** £25

Max Hastings has established his reputation as a prolific chronicler of military history. His works on the Vietnam War and the Second World War have won acclaim as highly accessible and meticulous pieces of research. The present volume, which relates the overnight destruction of German dams by the RAF's 617 Squadron and its impact on those swept away by the torrents, brings into focus the human side of the story.

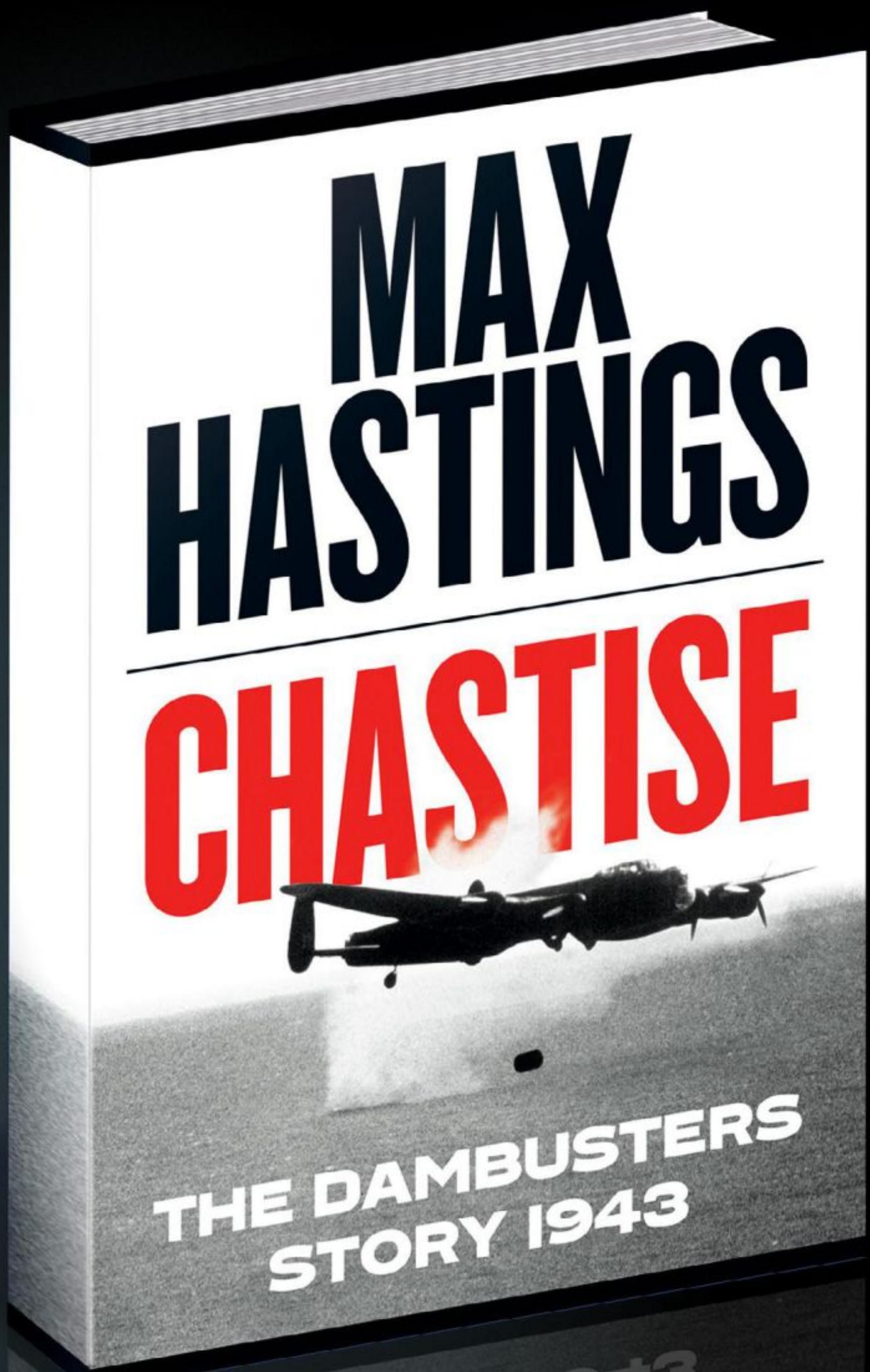
The book brings the reader into contact with the major protagonists of the operation, most intriguingly Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur 'Bomber' Harris who, we learn, opposed Chastise as a distraction from his merciless bombings of German cities. On the subject of civilian casualties, Hastings brings to light the fate of some 1,400 people who were swept away in the wake of the demolished dams. More than half of these civilians were Russian and Polish slave labourers.

Hastings' narrative starts in the cockpit of an Avro Lancaster heavy bomber on its way to Germany on the night of 16 May 1943. The plane was leading the Bomber Command squadron to unleash a revolutionary new weapon, the bouncing bomb designed by Barnes Wallis. Hastings expresses his admiration for Wallis' "brilliance and personality" and his awe for the achievement of 617 Squadron Leader Guy Gibson. At the same time the author cannot conceal his horror at the Biblical catastrophe unleashed by Operation Chastise. It becomes clear throughout the book that the raid, while a spectacular propaganda feat that boosted British morale, in military effectiveness caused no more than minor disruption to the Ruhr's industrial output and had little impact on the war's outcome. JS

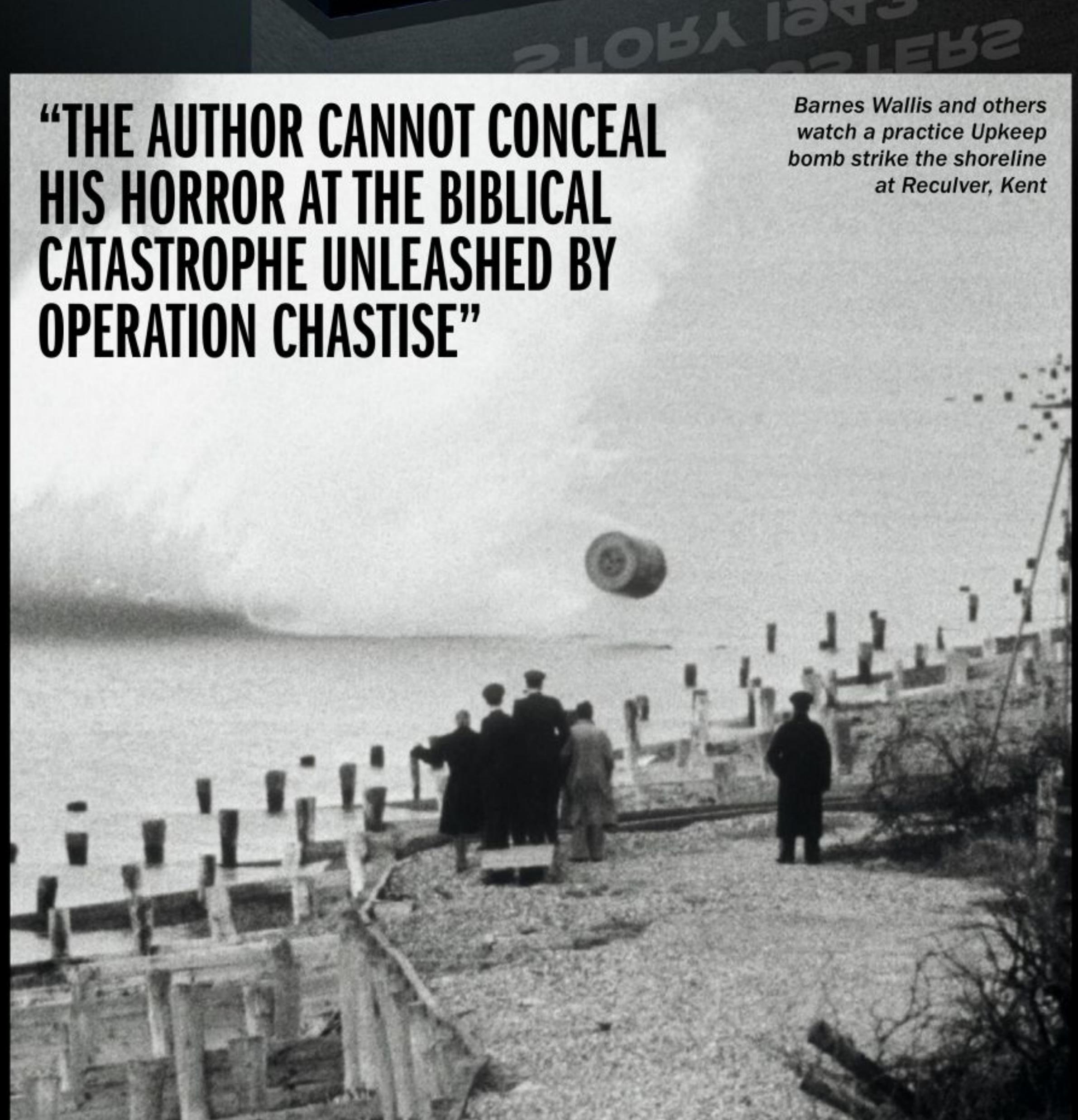
*Below: Möhne Dam after the attack  
Bottom: Eder Dam on 17 May 1943*



**"THE AUTHOR CANNOT CONCEAL HIS HORROR AT THE BIBLICAL CATASTROPHE UNLEASHED BY OPERATION CHASTISE"**



Barnes Wallis and others watch a practice Upkeep bomb strike the shoreline at Reculver, Kent



# BRITAIN AND THE BOMB

## TECHNOLOGY, CULTURE AND THE COLD WAR

A CONFUSED ATTEMPT TO FIND A NARRATIVE IN THE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAMME

**Author:** W.J. Nuttall **Publisher:** Whittles Publishing **Price:** £18.99

The story of Britain's independent nuclear deterrent is a fascinating one and provides more than enough raw material for an engrossing study. W.J. Nuttall demonstrates a great depth of knowledge in this slim volume, but sadly the structure of his work lets this book down.

With limited space (just 200 pages of text) a tight and disciplined approach is essential, but Nuttall is unable to weave a compelling narrative from the many facts at his fingertips. A central theme of the book is difficult to identify. Although the title suggests it is an overarching study of Britain's nuclear weapons programme during the Cold War period, the text refers to the doomed TSR2 bomber project as the focal point. This would have been a credible approach (although it would have perhaps demanded a different title), but Nuttall undermines this assertion by only properly getting down to the story of the TSR2 more than a quarter of the way into the book.

The narrative also suffers from a failure to stick to a timeline. A brief section on the Suez crisis of 1956 is followed immediately by a jump back to the early 1950s and the early British nuclear weapons programme. Throughout the book, in fact, subjects are picked up and dropped in a sometimes disorientating whirl.

This is a great pity because Nuttall's knowledge is apparent and his passion for the subject is undeniable. A more tightly focused approach could have resulted in a far more useful book. The price, at £18.99, also seems unusually high for a slim paperback. **DS**



# LIVES RECLAIMED

*A Story of Rescue and Resistance in Nazi Germany*

LIVES  
RECLAIMED  
MARK ROSEMAN



THE EXTRAORDINARY STORY OF A GERMAN IDEALIST GROUP WHICH DEFIED THE NAZIS TO HELP JEWS DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

**Writer:** Mark Roseman **Publisher:** Oxford University Press  
**Price:** £20 **Released:** 26 September 2019

In the wake of defeat in the First World War Germany experienced an explosion of radical and revolutionary political movements looking to promote their own interests in the post-Wilhelmine monarchy state. One such group, which now appears to have been all but lost to history, is the Bund. Founded in 1924 the group was originally setup by Artur Jacobs and eight fellow teachers and pupils of the Volkshochschulen in Essen in the Ruhr. As an educational institute for adults, these early members were aged between 25 and 45, the majority being women.

It was a small, left-wing, socialist organisation which sought to develop an egalitarian communal life, which they hoped might grow into an ideal community that would one day become a model for wider society.

Despite the rise of the Nazis in the 1930s the Bund somehow endured and grew. What is remarkable was its resistance to Nazism and how members put themselves at considerable risk to help persecuted Jews.

Following the outbreak of the Second World War the Bund attempted to help Jews by sending letters and parcels to the ghettos and concentration camps of Poland and Bohemia and Moravia. Members also hid Jews and provided them with false ID papers, all at great personal risk to themselves.

Author Mark Roseman has meticulously researched and skilfully written about this little-known group and tells their remarkable story of courage and selflessness, while they were under the constant threat of discovery by the notorious Gestapo or denunciation by their ever-watchful neighbours. **MS**

# THE BIRDCATCHER

A GRIPPING, WELL-ACTED AND THOUGHTFUL MELODRAMMA SET AGAINST THE PERILOUS BACKDROP OF OCCUPIED NORWAY

**Director:** Ross Clarke **Distributor:** Signature Entertainment **Stars:** August Diehl, Sarah-Sofie Boussnina, Jakob Cedergren, Laura Birn

Norway-set WWII movies are generally few and far between. Among the most well-known is the ripping yarn *The Heroes Of Telemark* starring Kirk Douglas and Richard Harris. These films tend to hinge on acts of defiance, espionage or resistance, but the country's complex relationship with fascism and the Third Reich's occupation of the nation has become an increased focus for filmmakers. Compared to other countries under the jackboot heel of Hitler's National Socialists, Jewish populations of Oslo and Trondheim were tiny. Still, citizens were vehemently persecuted and rounded up with hundreds sent to Auschwitz.

In Ross Clarke's British-Norwegian co-production, *The Birdcatcher*, a Jewish woman posing as man on a rural farm becomes the conduit through which we witness the power dynamics at work between the occupier and the occupied – how some Norwegians openly embraced Aryan ideology and saw the Nazis as brethren.

Set in 1942 Sarah-Sofie Boussnina leads the cast as Esther, a teen who dreams of leaving the confines of the frozen north for sunny Los Angeles. When we first meet her she's reciting Shakespeare and fantasises about achieving Hollywood stardom. One night the Nazis call and execute Esther's father during his arrest. The underground movement helps the girl and her mother escape, but the Nazis catch on to the ruse and execute everybody, bar Esther, who manages to hide from their attention. Lost in the snowbound countryside, with no food or suitable clothing, she chances upon a farm and ingratiates herself into a troubled family.

While Trond Morten Kristensen's melodramatic screenplay is a mainstream survivor's tale complete with emotional beats that wish to move you tremendously but miss the mark, where it succeeds is in the interplay between family members symbolising life under Nazi rule in microcosm. Esther's arrival slowly disrupts the flow and structure of patriarchal and political tyranny, as she awakens in the son and the mother a realisation they are profoundly unhappy. Esther's transformation into a waifish lad isn't at all convincing, but it isn't supposed to be either. It's pitched as a fascinating shared delusion with mutual benefits. The boorish pater familias, Johann (Johannes Kuhnke), takes a shine to Ole (the name Esther selects for her new identity), first as a child replacement, Aksel (Arthur Hakalahti) is disabled and deemed unmanly, and then a creepy sexual attraction develops. The mother and son use Ole/Esther as an emotional pillar.

Elegantly photographed with good production values, the Scandinavian and German cast perform well in English, though the dialogue is clunky on occasion (the script is at fault, not the actors). Those au fait with European cinema might recognise German star August Diehl, but it's Boussnina who strongly emerges as the standout. She makes Esther a believably resourceful, formidable and indomitable spirit, not only of Jewish defiance in the face of evil, but as the spirit of liberation. A downside is Jim Copperthwaite's schmaltzy score, which is too often overbearing and deployed atop scenes in a desperate attempt to shoehorn in a sweeping dramatic grandeur to proceedings. **MC**



WWII THIS MONTH...

# NOVEMBER 1939

To commemorate 80 years since the Second World War, every issue **History of War** will be taking a look at some of the key events taking place each month of the conflict

## THE WINTER WAR FIRES UP

After negotiations between Soviet and Finnish diplomats failed, the Red Army finally launched its offensive against Finland. From the air Russian bombers were able to reach the capital Helsinki while the outnumbered Finnish army, mobilised the previous month, prepared to defend against the Soviets. During the fighting camouflaged ski troops were able to effectively use their knowledge of the terrain, and mobility to hamper the Russian supply lines, and defeat isolated formations.



## POLAND'S EXILES

After the capitulation of Poland, Prime Minister Wladyslaw Sikorski set up his government in exile in Angers, France, joined by what forces and politicians were also able to escape to the West. After the fall of France the following year, Sikorski and his cabinet relocated again, this time to London, where the Government in Exile was permanently based until 1990.



## DEADLY WATERS AROUND BRITAIN

Despite the continuing 'Phoney War' across the channel, with the BEF and French forces entrenched for winter, German submarines and magnetic mines were a constant menace to shipping, both Allied and neutral. Dropped into the Thames Estuary by low-flying aircraft, floating mines struck craft indiscriminately despite determined Royal Navy efforts to clear them, sinking scores of civilian and military ships. On the night of 20/21 November the Japanese ocean liner Terukuni Maru struck a German mine and swiftly sank, although all passengers and crew survived. The same day, HMS Gipsy, a G-class Destroyer, was sunk by a mine while coming out of Harwich harbour. Over 30 of the crew were killed, including the captain. Earlier Gipsy had rescued German airmen who had been shot down in the area.



DAILY MIRROR, Friday, November 24, 1939  
No. 12,221 + + + ONE PENNY  
Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper.

## MINES DROPPED BY PARACHUTE IN RAID

MAGNETIC mines were dropped by parachutes from two Nazi seaplanes flying low over the Thames estuary, it was announced yesterday. They were dropped by the raiders after Wednesday night's air raid warning was given.

The mines are exceptionally light and can be dropped from heights of 1,000 ft.

A seaplane could carry quite a number of these miniature mines and sow them indiscriminately. British naval experts have been watching and anticipating this new method of warfare and have devised means by which to combat it.

**He Saw Them Fall**

"I saw two machines caught in the searchlights and thought they were going to drop bombs. I was looking out of my window and then while I was looking round I heard the noise of a plane. It was a seaplane.

"It crashed and when it impacted out of the sky it exploded. I saw a lot of smoke and then more than 100 ft away another drop from the machine and smash in the water."

Maritime experts believe the new method of warfare will be adopted by the Germans in view of its high novelty value.

British naval experts have devised means by which to combat it.

**Britain Can Retaliate**

One German seaplane was seen to right on the coast of Kent and drop a mine. It was either another a mine or trying to drop a bomb.

Both Germany and neutrals possess flying boats which are capable of dropping magnetic mines and it is only possible to estimate the exact weight of such mines without knowledge of the exact type of aircraft used.

They are carried in special racks fitted to the fuselage and the aircraft has to be specially strengthened to withstand the extra weight.

Other directions are relevant.

British ships have been driven to the sea by the Germans and have been unable to return to port.

There are many ways of attacking ships.

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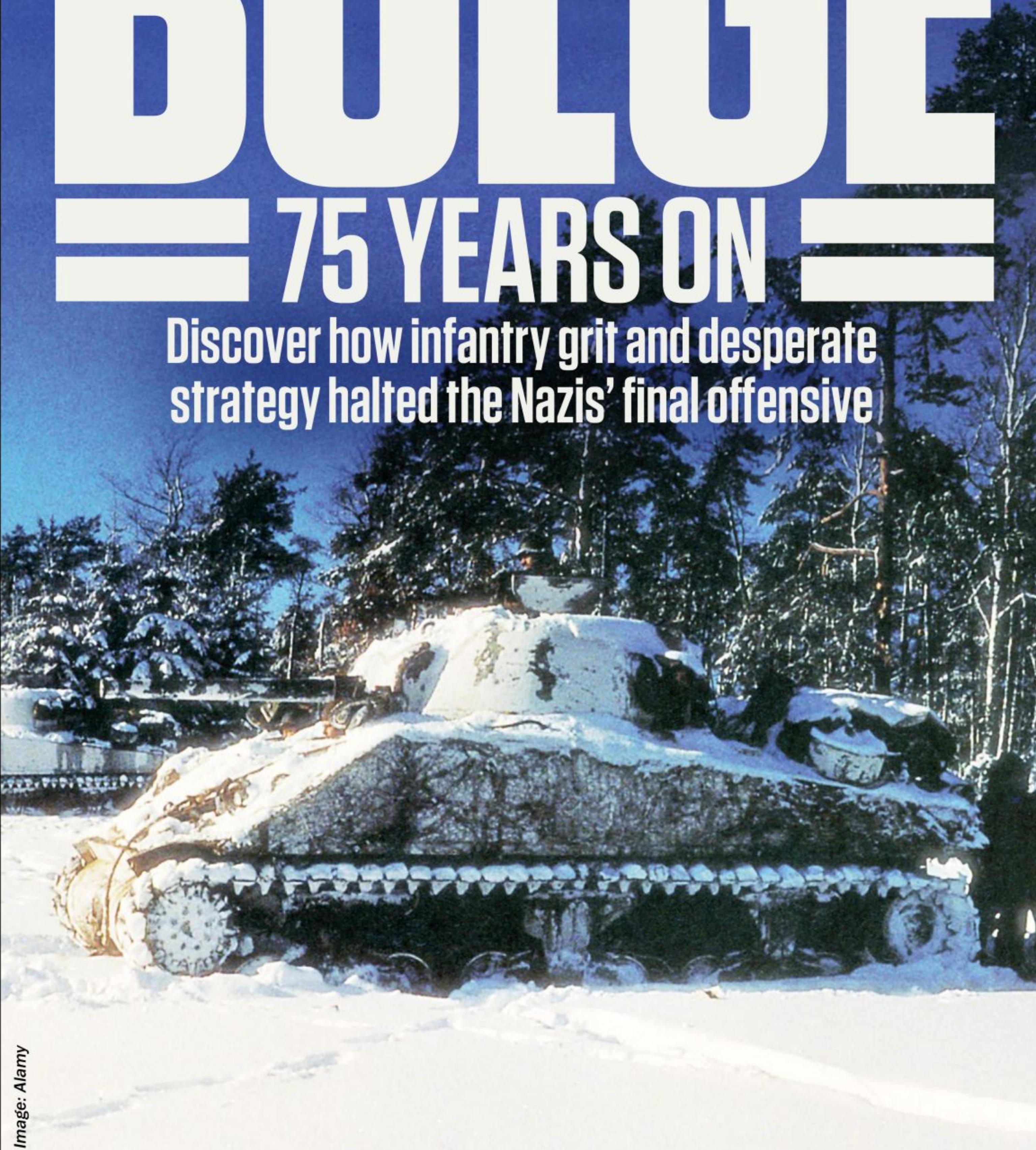


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The box lid names the Dublin Fusiliers' regimental predecessors' colonial victories dating back to the time of Clive of India

# BOER WAR TOY SOLDIERS

These lead models depict infantrymen from the Royal Irish Fusiliers, a regiment that fought in the South African conflict

**C**reated in 1881 the Royal Dublin Fusiliers was an Irish infantry regiment of the British Army. Following garrison duties in the United Kingdom and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) it was deployed to South Africa to participate in the Second Boer War (1899-1902).

The fusiliers fought extensively in the conflict against the Boer republics of the Transvaal and Orange Free State. This included the first major engagement at Talana Hill, the battles of Colenso and Tugela Heights as well as the Siege of Ladysmith. Nevertheless their most famous action arguably occurred on 15 November 1899 when a regimental detachment was ambushed and captured while they were escorting an armoured train. A young war

correspondent by the name of Winston Churchill was also taken prisoner and this episode, as well his subsequent escape from a Boer POW camp, made the future British prime minister famous.

Back in Britain children would learn about the war in school, comics, books, games and toys. One example of the jingoistic commercialisation of the grim conflict was this box set of eight model soldiers of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Made of lead, these khaki troops were manufactured by William Britain and Sons in London and have movable arms. The box lid also lists the amalgamated battle honours that the fusiliers achieved in their original units of the 102nd and 103rd Regiments of Foot.

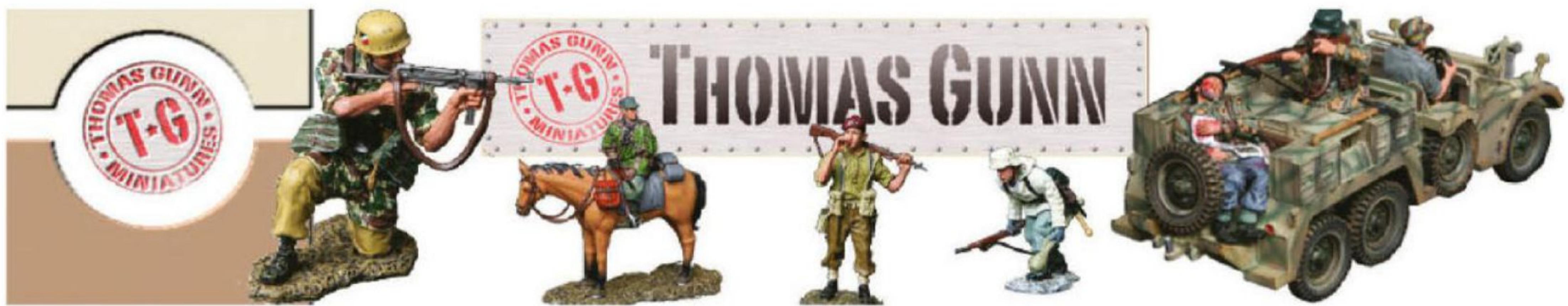
William Britain produced a total of a dozen different sets of lead soldiers that were inspired by the war. The company still exists today and has far outlived the Dublin Fusiliers. Despite extensive service during WWI, the regiment was disbanded in 1922 following the creation of the Irish Free State.



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The model soldiers are held in the collections of the National Army Museum in Chelsea, London.



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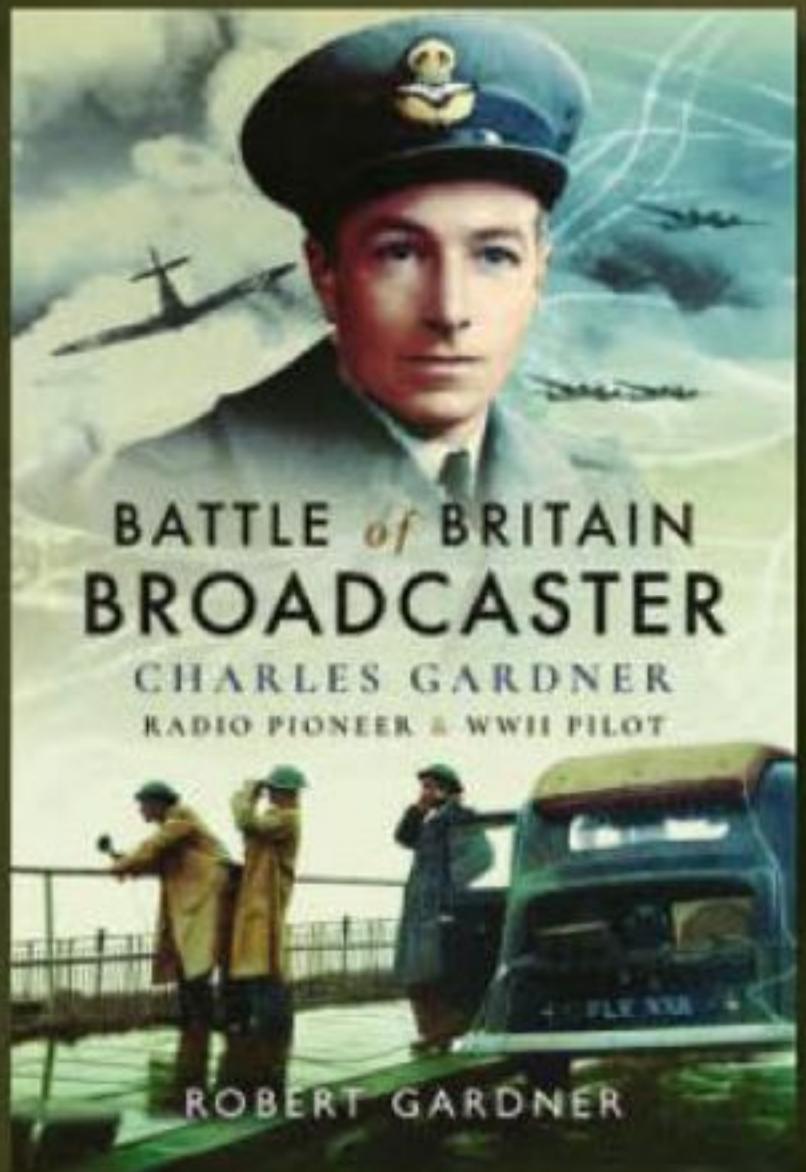
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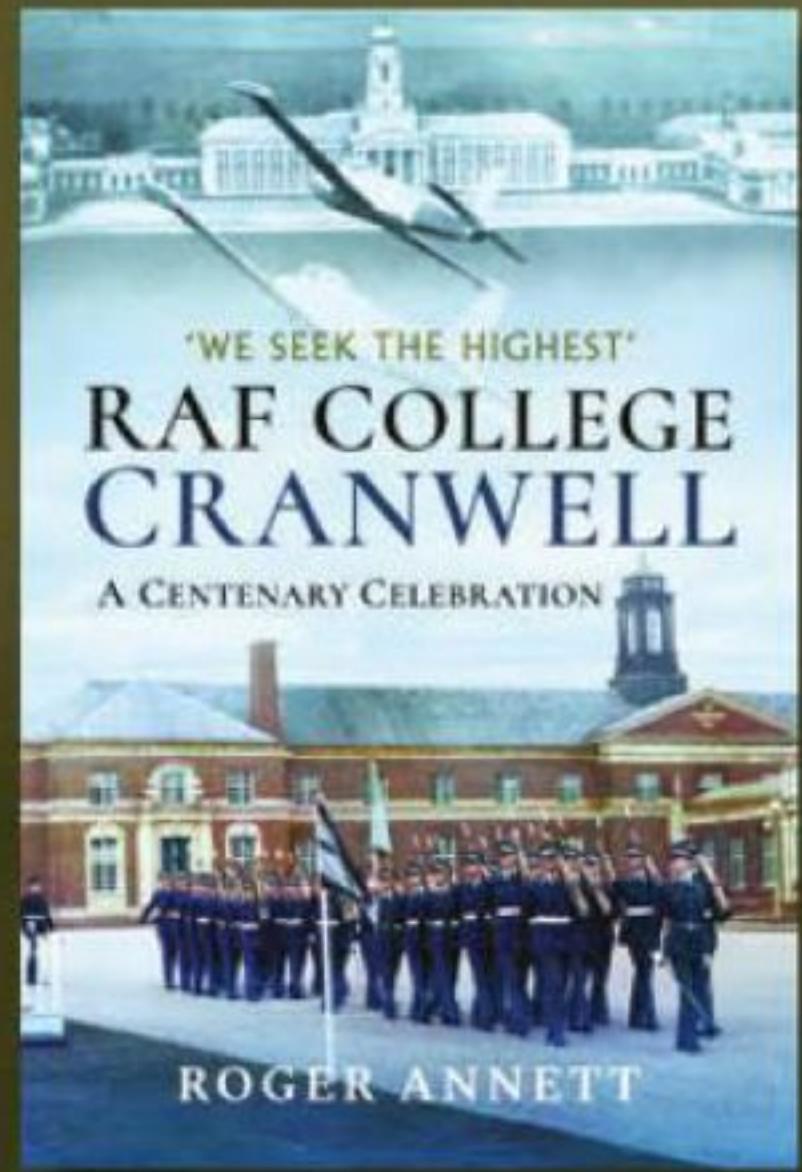
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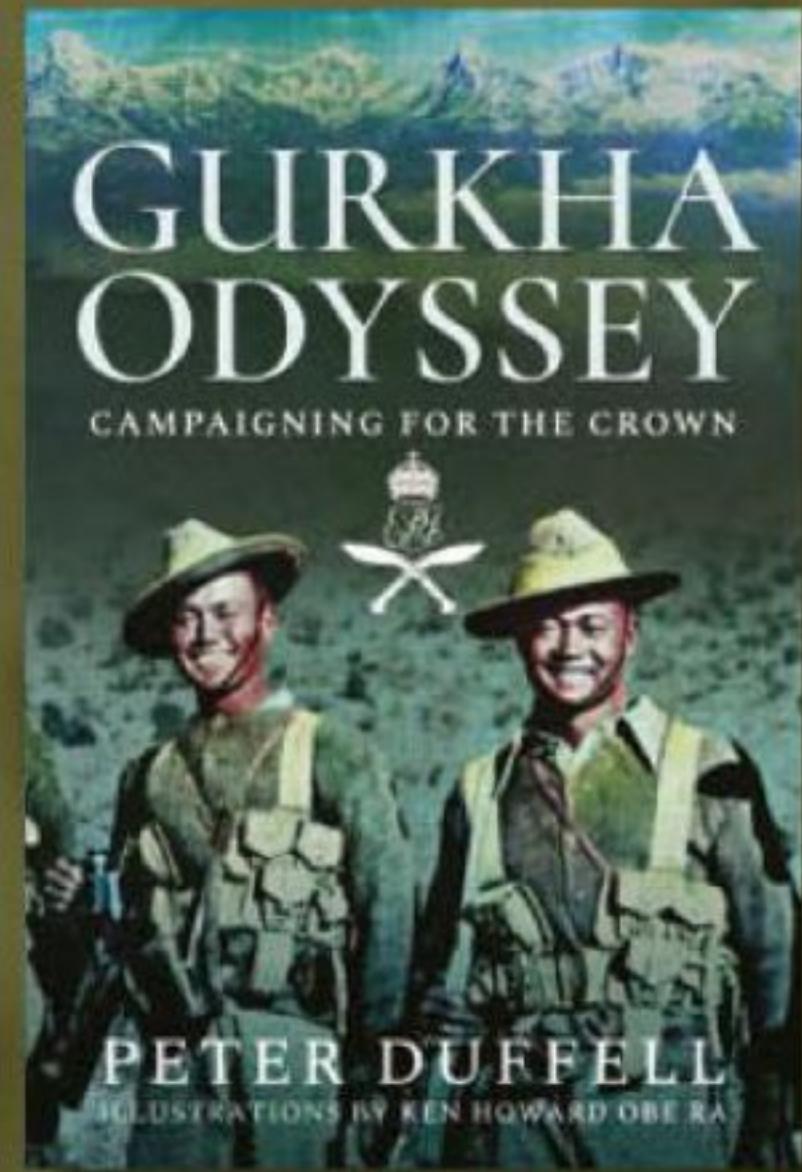
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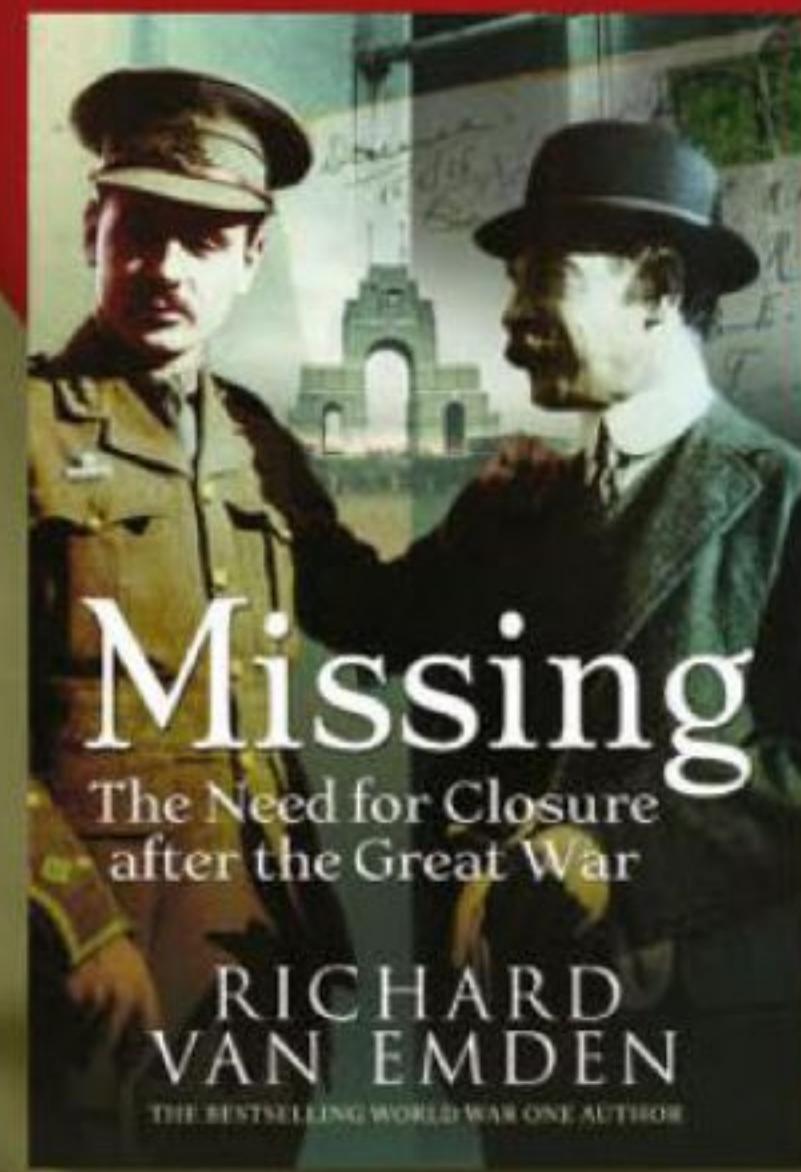
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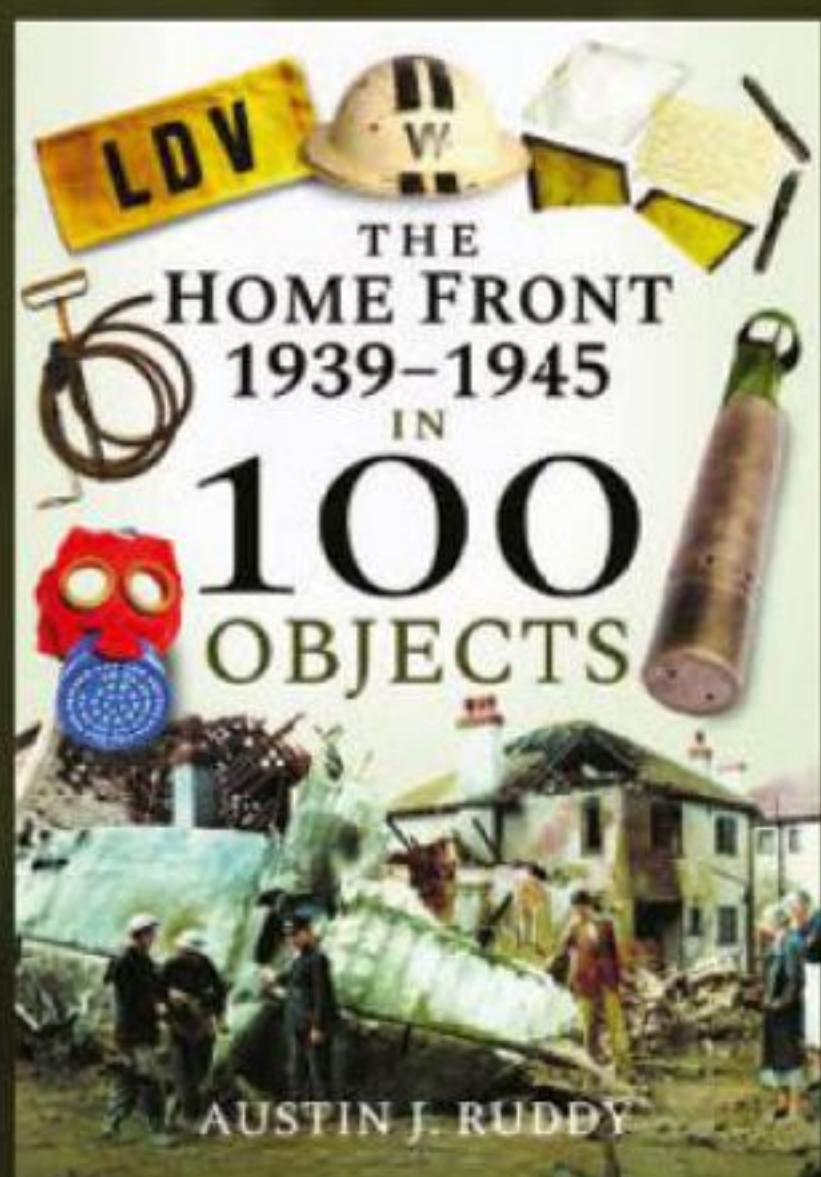
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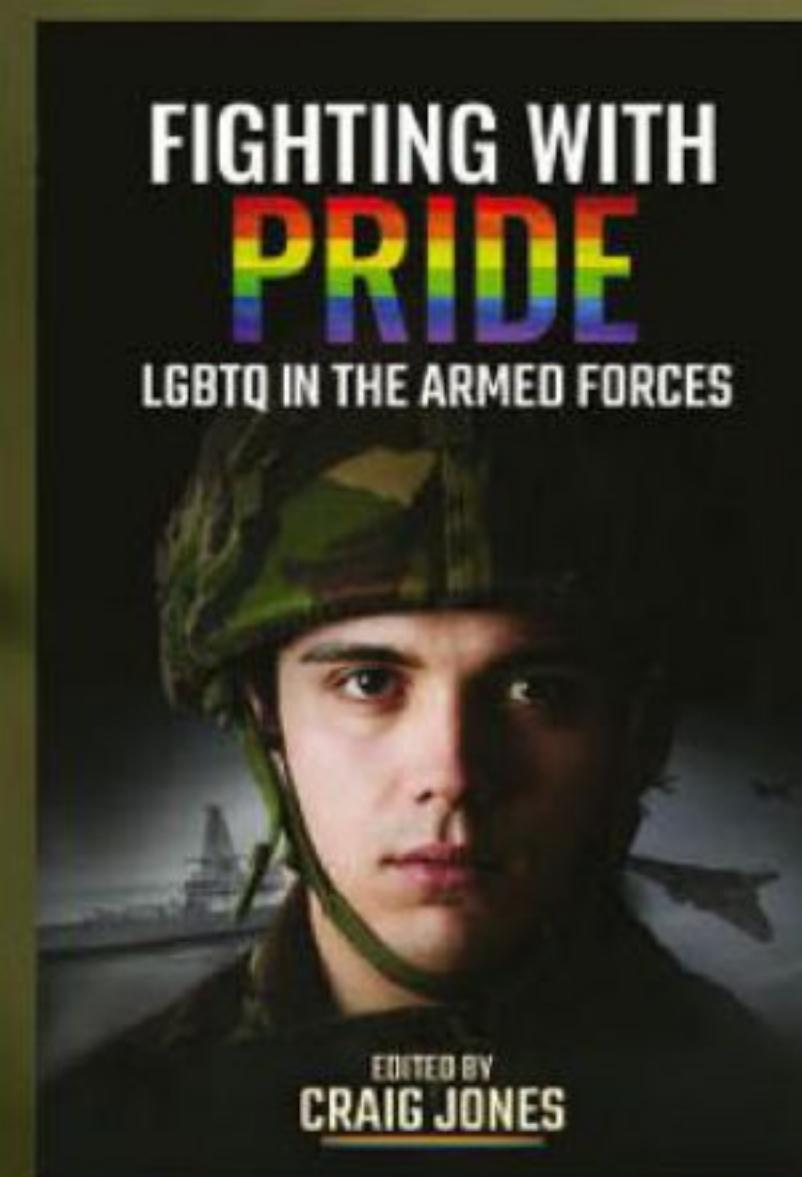
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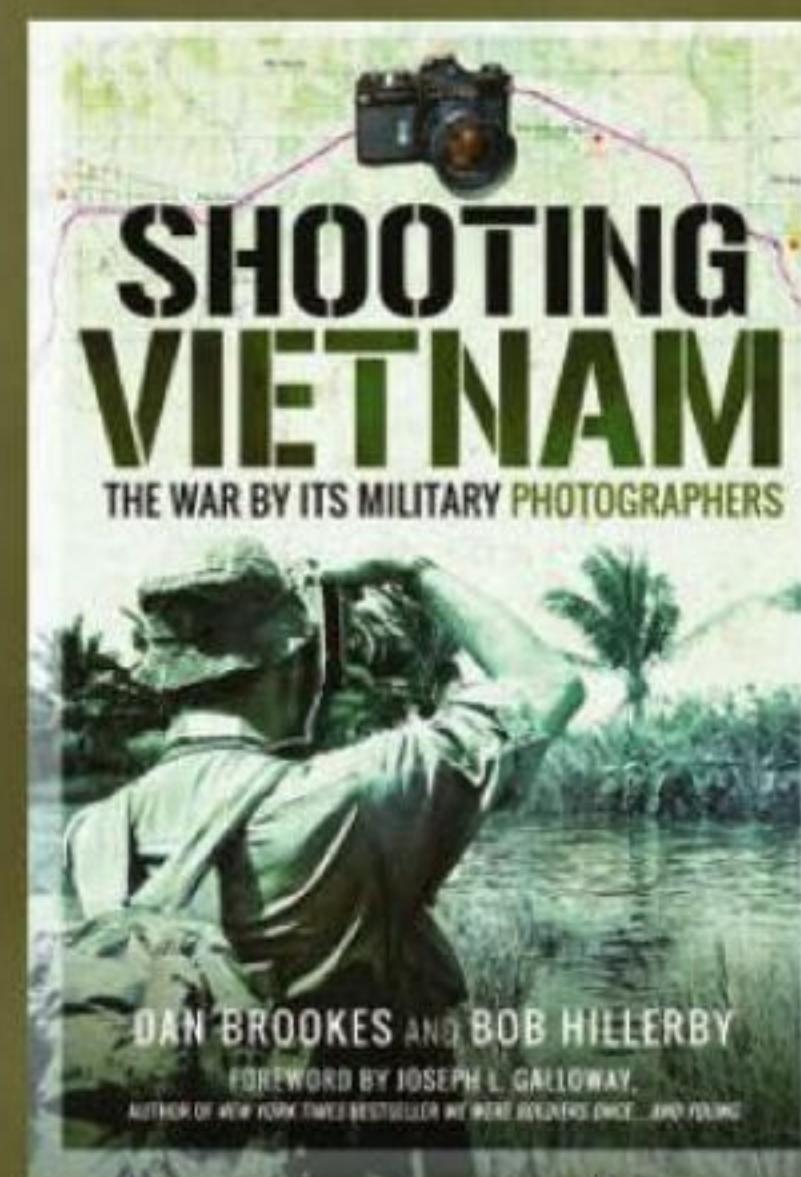
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